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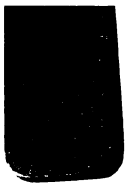
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# **CALVARY AND THE ALTAR.**

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# CALVARY AND THE ALTAR;

OR,

DEVOTIONS FOR THE OCTAVE OF THE  
BLESSED SACRAMENT,

THE

FORTY HOURS (QUARANT' ORE),

AND THE

DAYS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR HOLY COMMUNION."

(*Mademoiselle Guillemant.*)

WITH PREFACE BY LADY HERBERT. *h*

"My delights are to dwell with the children of men."

LONDON:  
THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON;  
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MDCCCLXX.



**TO THE**  
**LORD BISHOP OF NEWPORT AND MENEVIA,**  
**THIS**  
**LITTLE WORK IS DEDICATED,**  
**AS A**  
**HUMBLE TOKEN OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE,**  
**BY**  
**THE TRANSLATOR.**

**December, 1870.**

**To the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle,  
the most sweet God of the Holy Eucharist,  
be paid the homage of my gratitude, adora-  
tion, and love.**

## PREFACE.

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“The Blessed Sacrament is the triumph of the Church over the world, of Spirit over matter, of Grace over nature, of Faith over sight.

“The Blessed Sacrament is *everything* to us.”

So speaks Father Faber in his exquisite book on the Blessed Sacrament, which it would almost seem had exhausted the subject. And yet it is not so. It partakes of that Divine fertility which is ever suggesting new thoughts to holy souls, and so Mdlle. Guilleman has in this little work put the old and beautiful Truth before us in a new light. She has drawn out the intimate connection between Calvary and the Altar, as typified by the Crucifix, the inseparable accompaniment of Holy Mass. She has made us realize more than ever that prodigy of Love, which makes Him descend



hourly on countless altars throughout the world, and remain sheathed and veiled in the quiet modesty of the Blessed Sacrament, a Prisoner in the Tabernacle for our sakes, until the consummation of all things. She has made us tread with her once more, step by step, the sad and sacred way from the scene of the Last Supper to the Last Word on the Cross: and then pointed, as Father Faber has likewise done, to the glorious Mission of the Church, and of us, its members, to make reparation in the most signal manner possible for the insults done to His Divine Majesty in this His special Sacrament of Love. And surely in no country is teaching of this sort more needed than in England, where material interests have almost swallowed up the interior life: where this last Invention of His Divine tenderness and compassion is ridiculed, contemned, and trampled under foot: where He passes unrecognised and unknown through the streets of our great cities, and no knee, save perhaps that of some poor Irishman, bends in adoration: where He waits, day after day, and hour after hour, in the silence and solitude of His little Prison House on the Altar,

and no one thinks of Him, no one visits Him, no one cares for Him, no one loves Him !

Are we not tempted to say, like the apostles of old, " How can these things be ? " Nothing is so wounding to a heart that loves another, as coldness and indifference on the part of the loved one. We feel this every day in the natural relations of life, and yet we fail to perceive the depth of our insensibility towards that Sacred Heart, who has so loved us as to die for us ; and O, still greater miracle, who deigns, veiled in the sacred species, to go on dwelling with us and amongst us, though we seem as if we knew Him not.

It is to bring such thoughts home to our minds, to kindle greater love in our hearts, and to furnish to devout souls fresh motives for adoration and thanksgiving, that this Book has been written. The translation has been admirably done by the same pen which has previously given us the " Reflections and Prayers for Holy Communion," with a Preface by his Grace the Archbishop of Westminster, of which work he speaks as a valuable addition to our books of devotion, being in a high degree, real and solid.

The one before us is in no way inferior to this, in point of style or in depth and vigour of thought. It is especially intended for the Devotion of the "Forty Hours," a devotion which now, thank God, has become habitual amongst us, especially during the Lenten season. May it help many souls to realize more fully this great and wonderful mystery. And may it kindle in all our hearts a deeper sense of our own coldness and indifference, and a more courageous determination to make reparation in our own persons, as far as may be, for the insults offered to His marvellous Love in this our country; so that we may thus make amends for the neglect of those whose eyes are blinded that they cannot see Him, or who, knowing Him, are yet careless and unmindful of His Presence.

Father Faber beautifully says that there are two kinds of Catholics in England, who are specially bound to this devotion. "Either those who have inherited the Faith from the martyrs, or those whom God has gone out of His way by a miracle of mercy, to call into the true Fold: and both these classes have peculiar obligations of their

own to the Blessed Sacrament, the one because He was always theirs, the other because He was not always theirs, but is theirs now."

What Jesus gives us in this mystery is His whole Self and His Time, and in these two things consists the peculiarity of His Sacramental Life.

May each and all join in this deep and quiet devotion of reparatory love. May no worldly occupation or human respect keep us from our daily visits to His Tabernacle, and, in the words of the pious Archdeacon Boudon, "May the holy angels who abide in our churches, and watch over our altars, ask pardon of the Divine Majesty for our irreverence, our coldness, and our insensibility, and inspire us with the knowledge of the suitable means to obtain for this Mystery of Love, the Reverence which is Its due."

M. E. H.



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# CALVARY AND THE ALTAR.

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FIRST DAY OF THE OCTAVE OF THE BLESSED  
SACRAMENT.

THE FAREWELL SUPPER.

“Do this in remembrance of Me.”

I.—*The Upper Chamber.*

Before He left the world and returned to His Father, Jesus desired once more to assemble His apostles together, and to take a farewell meal with them. Our Blessed Lord's countenance is illuminated with a sacred joy, His eye rests tenderly upon each of those dear companions of His ministerial life and labour, and never has He regarded them with such intense affection, never has He addressed them with so much gentleness and feeling, never before has His Divine Person appeared so resplendent with majesty and grace, so beaming with supreme devoted love to His children and His friends. Why then is the Heart of Jesus so expansive in its tenderness? Why are His features illumined with this celestial joy? Knows He not that the space of a few hours only divides Him from all the bitter torments which He must undergo in His Passion; that already the cross awaits Him, that it is even close at hand; and that before the morning's sun shall sink below

the horizon, it shall have witnessed His last sighs, and the shedding of the last drop of His most Precious Blood?

Jesus knows all this, nothing is hidden from His sight, but Love impels Him onwards, Love quickens the pulsations of His Sacred Heart, and Love irradiates His countenance with the heavenly joys of self-sacrifice. The hour is at hand, it is already come, that hour which Jesus desired so ardently, during all the days of His mortal life; that blessed hour, for which He sighed so eagerly, for which He wept and prayed when He lay in the humble manger of Bethlehem, when His exiled feet trod the land of Egypt, and when He laboured in the workshop at Nazareth. Now, at last, is the cherished dream of His Heart to be speedily accomplished, now will His great work be fulfilled; His wondrous work of infinite charity, of inexhaustible self-sacrifice.

Jesus is now about in the exercise of His Almighty Power to create for Himself an entirely new sphere of existence; in this upper chamber, He is about to begin a new life, even that Eucharistic life, which is to last as long as the world itself endures, and in which He will be the Guest of men, until the coming of that day, when, at the end of the world, the angels shall carry to heaven the last consecrated Host, and deposit it with deepest reverence, in that most glorious and worthy tabernacle of the Incarnate Word, even the Immaculate Heart of His Virgin Mother, in which it shall be preserved for ever as an eternal monument of the wondrous love displayed to man by our Saviour and our God.

On this solemn occasion, our Blessed Lord has only twelve guests present at His table, but, to His eye, the future ages are unveiled, He knows that this feast of love, which is now spread in the upper chamber for the first time, will never cease in all time to come; that it will be prolonged and extended into all nations, and throughout the whole universe of God; that the countless generations of the children of the Church will come in turn to partake of that celestial banquet, and to feed upon that very bread which He is now about to dispense to His apostles, at the same time that He invests them with power and authority to reproduce it in His name, to multiply it, and to dispense it in their turn to their brethren throughout all the ages of the world.

It was not only His own apostles whom Jesus regarded so tenderly at this moment, He beheld also the countless multitudes of souls who should one day receive Him, to whom He would hereafter communicate Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. His Heart knows them all, He counts them one by one, He loves them all collectively, and each one of them with a peculiar, special, discriminating love. His prescience can point out the exact moment in which He will meet with each of those souls during His eucharistic pilgrimage of centuries; He knows the day, the hour, the very minute, in which each of those beloved ones shall come to His heavenly banquet, to receive for the first time that legacy of love which His Heart is now preparing for them; more than this, He ardently desires that blissful moment; He desires it with a

desire as fervent as that with which He sighed for the arrival of that blessed day, upon which His Church has so appropriately bestowed the name of Holy Thursday. Before the arms of our Blessed Lord are stretched out upon the cross to receive all mankind in their embrace of love, His Sacred Heart will expand in an ecstasy of tenderness, in a fervent impulse of intense and infinite charity, to assemble and unite in that loving embrace, all those souls who are to live by Him in the most Holy Eucharist; He thirsts to bestow Himself upon them, He thirsts to receive their love; and it is for their benefit, as much as for His apostles, that He is now about to break the Bread of Immortality and Life.

## II.

What majesty, but, at the same time, what touching simplicity, do we observe in these words of our Blessed Lord! What magnificence, but, especially, what love appears in the gift which He bestows upon us! A father, who is just about to be separated from his children by death; a friend, who is on the point of departing to a distant country, desires to leave behind him some lasting pledge of tenderness and love. And Jesus, too, is now about to die, and His Heart, which is far more tender and loving than that of any earthly parent or friend, is also eagerly desirous of leaving to those whom He loves more than Himself, a remembrance of His infinite, surpassing love. But Jesus is poor in worldly goods, He possesses nothing of His own, and has not even a place in

which He can lay His head. What, then, can He leave us? Ah, the treasures of love are inexhaustible, and the Heart of our Jesus has still a rich gift in reserve for His beloved children.

The Incarnate Word has lifted up His eyes to heaven, He is entranced, absorbed, in the Divine ideas with which His soul is filled. His apostles, full of astonishment and admiration, contemplate His glorious countenance, and await, in silence, the miracle which they expect. Many great miracles have they witnessed their beloved Master perform, but this they think will be the greatest of all, for never yet have they beheld His divine countenance so majestic, so radiant with celestial light, and yet so sweet and lovely; they wait in reverent silence and expectation, what then will be the result? Jesus took bread, He blessed it, brake it, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat, this is My Body." Then He took the cup also, and blessed it, and said to them, "Take and drink ye all of this; this is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me."

The apostles partook of the heavenly bread with which Jesus presented them; each one of them took his share of that mysterious chalice; and the heart of each apostle became a living tabernacle, in which the Master whom they adored, and whom they now beheld sitting at table with them for the last time, reposed with joy and love. For this bread, now given them by the Lord, is not a *figure* of His adorable Body; the wine which they drank is not an *emblem* of that Precious Blood, which is in a few hours to be poured out for them,

as well as for the whole world; no, it is the true Body and true Blood of Jesus Christ Himself. Here there is no figure, no type or emblem, but the great reality itself. Our Saviour's words are precise and clear, the truth which they contain is not shrouded in the veils of parable or mystery; He simply says, "This is My Body, this is My Blood. Do this in commemoration of Me." And by these simple words, the greatest of all miracles is instantaneously effected. The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

God makes use of few and simple words to effect the most amazing results; and these few syllables uttered by the Word Incarnate, were in some sort more powerful than even that creating Fiat, which called the universe into existence from chaos, and gave life to every creature that moves and breathes throughout the world, for they gave to God Himself a new life, or rather created for Him a new sphere of existence, and assured His presence to fallen man during all the days of His earthly pilgrimage.

Jesus uttered but few words, but by these few words He brought into existence His most admirable work of might, wisdom, and love. He gave Himself to His Church, not in figure only, but in reality, henceforth He belongs to His Church as an inalienable possession, and He commands His apostles to confer their power upon their successors, and constitutes them, as it were, His universal legates, that they may transmit this precious legacy of Himself to the Church throughout all ages.

Yes, Jesus has now given Himself to His

Church, He has given Himself to us, His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity, all henceforth belong to us ; He has kept nothing for Himself, and the value of this magnificent gift is doubled by the love with which it is bestowed. Waters cannot cool this love, floods cannot drown it, nothing can arrest the abundant flow of His tenderness, or interpose even a momentary obstacle to the generosity and love of the Sacred Heart of our Jesus. Rather than leave us even for a moment, He condescends to an abasement even more profound than that which He endured in the course of His mortal life, and He embraces this humiliation with readiness and joy. He knows too well that amongst these men whom He loves with such intense devotion, He will find few indeed disposed to make Him a fitting return ; and that all the devices of His inexhaustible charity will be insufficient to overcome the indifference of their cold and selfish hearts ; He knows even the outrage, contempt, and insult to which He will be exposed in His eucharistic life, He reckons up all the profanations to which His adorable body will be subjected ; but neither the crime of Judas, who had already given Him a foretaste of all the sorrows which His Sacred Heart would be called upon to endure throughout the countless ages of the world, nor that clear view of all our crime and ingratitude, which lay before Him at this solemn moment, could avail to stay the exhibition of His love, or to overcome that eager desire with which His Heart was inspired, to give Himself to those souls who should be able to appreciate the immensity of the gift, and to respond to His amazing



love by the best affection which they are capable of bestowing upon Him.

It was with joy, with happiness, that Jesus gave Himself to us, that He left us His Sacred Body, which was now to be lacerated and tortured by all the agonies of His Passion. He gave It to us, to be our food and nourishment, to deposit in our souls a seed of heavenly life, a germ of immortality, to implant in us a sure pledge and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. He gave us His Blood, the Precious Blood of which the traitor Judas had already received the price, and which was now to be shed for our redemption; but not even satisfied with shedding it all for us, He desired to enable us all to apply its merits to ourselves, by receiving it into the inmost depths of our souls; He desired to leave it on earth to serve as a health-giving fountain, in which every one of those whom He loves with such tender and generous affection may bathe themselves as in a living flood, which is able to restore them to purity and strength.

He gave us His Soul: that Soul so pure, so holy, which He is now about to deliver over to all the agonies of Gethsemane, to all the anguish and desolation of Calvary. He gave it to us that He might bestow upon us the ineffable joys of the Holy Eucharist, that He might unite Himself to us and inoculate us with His own life, by living in us, by making us live in Him and for Him. Finally, He gave us His Divinity, to raise us from our degradation to a level with Himself, to make of us, if we may so express ourselves, other Christs and other Gods, by causing us to partici-

pate in His Divine Life here on earth, by the practice of all those virtues which the Holy Eucharist gives us strength to perform ; and to participate hereafter in His glorious life in heaven, of which this adorable sacrament is at once the foretaste and the pledge. Oh Holy Eucharist ! testament of Jesus, masterpiece of His love, and most precious gift of His Sacred Heart. Who can know Thee without loving Thee, without feeling the most fervent gratitude, the most ardent love, without desiring to live for Thee, and by Thee alone ?

### III.—*The Sacred Feast.*

Do we not envy the apostles' happiness, when they sat at the table of their Divine Master, and received from His own beloved hand the Bread of life and immortality ? Doubtless they were happy, but does not our happiness equal theirs ? Is not that Sacred Feast to which they sat down, prepared for us also ? and is not the God who graciously invites us to approach and partake of it still present upon that altar, presiding in person over the divine banquet which His love prepared for us in the upper chamber ? Yes, Jesus is there, He invites us all to be His guests, and every one of us may come to His table with the same holy joy and peaceful confidence as a child feels in seating himself at the table of his father, or a friend at that of his friend. Our hour is come, the hour in which we too can enjoy our Saviour's love, and offer Him the poor and humble tribute of our own. This hour, this day of

our lives has been desired by Jesus with an ardent desire, because it is that in which He is to meet us, in His journey, in His pilgrimage of centuries; and now that He has found us, now that He joyfully extends to us His loving arms, and shows us His Sacred Heart all burning with love for men, why should we fear to approach Him? why should we withdraw from His tender embraces? why, in a word, should we be afraid of Him who has loved us so unspeakably? It is true that Jesus is God, thrice-holy, eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable. But Jesus is also mercy, meekness, and love; and it is not for His angels that He has made ready this sacred table, but for us poor sinners, whose misery and wretchedness are well known to Him.

Therefore, in withdrawing from it, we shall inflict a most grievous wound upon His loving Heart; we shall deprive Him of the return which He expects us to make for so much love. There is but one way in which we can manifest our gratitude; it is by accepting joyfully the precious gift which He has bestowed upon us; it is by hungering and thirsting after Him, as He thirsts to bestow Himself upon us. If Jesus hides Himself under the appearance of bread, which is the ordinary food of man, that He may bestow Himself upon us, is it not in order to show us that He desires to become Himself our daily Bread? Ah, how easy has He made it for us to approach His table, since sin alone can be a barrier to our reception there! No guard defends the entrance to this palace of the King of kings, and though the ministers of the sanctuary keep watch around

the sacred precincts, that no one unprovided with the marriage garment, may take his place at the celestial banquet; yet is their ministry one of mercy alone, and they have received power and authority from the God of the holy Eucharist, to restore that robe of purity to those who have defiled it by their sins.

The glorious ranks of the heavenly host, also surround the tabernacle and the altar, but these guards are invisible and hidden; like their Divine Master, they do not dazzle us with the splendour of their glory, they are not armed with a flaming sword like those cherubim who were placed by God at the gates of the terrestrial paradise, to guard it for evermore against the entrance of fallen men, who had been driven with ignominy from the sacred precincts. They know that the God of the holy Eucharist does not require us to be possessed of their heavenly purity before we can be permitted to approach Him; and, therefore, if they surround the holy table, if they descend to worship amongst us the God whom they unceasingly contemplate and adore in heaven, and whom we, poor pilgrims, are permitted to receive in our hearts; it is that they may with us, and in us, adore and bless that same Lord, whom we are not able to adore and praise aright.

If we fly from Jesus, we fly from happiness, we fly from life! He comes to us, why should we depart from Him? He calls us, why then should we refuse His sweet, His pressing invitation? Has He not made Himself meek and lowly enough to drive away all our fears? Is He not kind and gentle enough to win all our confidence? I know

that Jesus is the God of heaven, the thrice Holy God, and that we are as nothing in His sight; but the mild light which shines upon us from the tabernacle is not that of the brightness of His awful glory and majesty, it is the cross which is elevated there, and throws its soft radiance of mercy upon our trembling souls; therefore, if we tremble as we adore the holiness and awful justice of Him who reigneth in heaven, let our fears be calmed when we contemplate the cross of Jesus, when we kneel before the God of the tabernacle and the altar. There He is our mediator, our victim; at this sacred feast He is even more than this, He is our Mother.

Yes, in Holy Communion, Jesus is our Mother, He nourishes us with His own substance, as a mother feeds her infant with the milk from her bosom; He loves us, caresses and consoles us, as a tender mother loves, consoles, and caresses her beloved child. Where is the child who shrinks from the embraces of his mother, who trembles at her kiss, who fears her when she caresses him most tenderly, who turns away in terror from the maternal bosom which she presents to him? There is no such child in existence, for the love of the mother is always repaid by the tender confidence of her offspring.

Why, then, do we not respond with equal confidence to the love of Jesus, a love far more tender, generous, devoted, and self-sacrificing, than that of the most affectionate mother?

Let us fear to displease our Jesus, let us purify our souls that we may be less unworthy of His heavenly caresses, let us gild the ciborium of our

hearts with the pure gold of ardent charity, when we are preparing to receive Him, let us approach Him with humble confidence, and trust ourselves, without reserve, to the love and tenderness of the God who invites us to come to Him, and loves us so much as to give Himself to us.

#### IV.

How dear to us should be the Holy Eucharist, which gives us, even upon earth, the God whom we hope to possess one day in heaven ! Ah, it should be more dear to us than the mother who bore us, dearer than the mother who played with us in our childhood, and whose affection grew and increased with our growth, dearer than the friend whose heart rests and reposes on our own, for Jesus is better to us than any, or all, of these beloved beings. Yes, Jesus in His Eucharist is tenderer than a mother, more loving than a brother, more devoted than a friend. If we ask the saints what Jesus is to them in this sacrament of His love, they will tell us that He is their strength, that He gives them courage to practise the most heroic virtue, to accomplish the most painful sacrifices, to seize joyfully every opportunity of practising the most sublime and self-sacrificing devotion ; but they will also tell us that He is the joy which charms their sorrows and softens their bitterest afflictions by His heavenly consolations ; that He is their life, their treasure, their all. They will tell you also, that Jesus in His Eucharist is the heavenly fire which inflames their hearts, the water which quenches their thirst, the wine which inebriates them with celestial

sweetness. They will tell you that the divine glance of Jesus penetrates their soul, that it enlightens and inflames it, that His voice is sweeter to their ear than the sweetest harmonies of earth, that His presence gives them a foretaste of the joys of heaven, and that they enjoy such sweet repose upon His sacred breast, that they sometimes feel as if heaven had begun even upon earth, and as if no happiness could possibly be more perfect than that which they already enjoy.

So sweet is the God of the Holy Eucharist to His saints, so sweet is He to all those faithful souls who receive Him with faith and love, so sweet will He be to us, if we gratefully adore Him, if we approach Him with purity of heart, with humility, with love.

Purity of conscience is indispensable to our right receiving of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist; let us then strive earnestly to purify our souls, not merely by humbly confessing our faults, but also by exercising great watchfulness over ourselves, that we may avoid whatever can stain the purity of our hearts, or displease the heavenly Guest whom we are preparing to receive. And let us not complain that this constant vigilance is too wearisome, that we cannot submit to it: for surely the happiness of pleasing Jesus cannot be purchased at too high a price! Would it be possible ever to do enough to merit the happiness of receiving Him, and especially of receiving Him frequently? Can we, without the blackest ingratitude, shrink from the performance of some few onerous duties, some trifling acts of self-denial, or mortification, when Jesus refused no

cup of suffering for our sakes, when He joyfully accepted the abasement of the tabernacle and the altar ?

We are not deterred by any difficulties or sacrifices, when our temporal interests are involved ; we shrink from no toil or labour in our endeavour to acquire worldly riches, and even when the acquisition only of some miserable pleasure, or fleeting enjoyment, is concerned, we are most eager in its pursuit ; shall we then be less ardent in our endeavours to attain this richest of all treasures, this sweetest of all joys, this most real and ravishing pleasure which it is possible to enjoy ? Ah, if we truly love Jesus, if we know Him, and desire to be permitted frequently to enjoy His presence, then will nothing seem too hard or too difficult, then shall we be filled with holy courage, when we remember that the heavenly bread of the most Holy Eucharist will be the reward of our efforts, of our sacrifices ; and that the God for whom we are preparing a dwelling in our souls, will communicate to them a portion of His own purity ; that in proportion to their emptiness of sin, will be the fulness of the treasures of His grace, which He will abundantly bestow upon them, and that in proportion to their purity, will be the closeness, tenderness, and sweetness of their union with Him, the beloved Spouse of their souls.

To purity of conscience let us join humility, but let our humility be full of confidence ; let us acknowledge our unworthiness, our nothingness, but let this acknowledgment, instead of driving us away from Jesus, only cause us to cling closer to



His feet. We are poor, our indigence is extreme, but this is no argument to induce us to fly from Him who is willing and able to make us rich; it is, on the contrary, a reason for our seeking Him with all possible speed. We are sick, and the Physician who alone can heal us, seeks admittance into our souls. We are weak, even weakness itself; we stumble and fall continually. Oh, let us rise again, with deep humiliation, but without discouragement, and let us have recourse, with humble penitence, to Him who can alone be our strength, and the support of our weakness. Yes, whatever our sorrows and our miseries may be, let us go to Jesus, let us go to Him continually, not, indeed, as thinking ourselves better than other men, or as less unworthy than those who refrain from approaching the Sacrament of His Love, but, on the contrary, with a profound conviction and deep inward feeling of our own weakness and unworthiness; so that, as we are less worthy than others, so have we more pressing need to feed more frequently than they upon the Bread of the strong, which is the aid and support of the weak.

But let us, above all, go to Jesus with love; let us go to Him with that eagerness, that sacred avidity, that insatiable hunger, which the possession of the desired object only tends to increase.

Let us go to Jesus because we love Him, let us go to Him because we desire to love Him still more tenderly, let us go to Him who is love, to know how to love, and how to give ourselves to Him, as He gives Himself to us. Let us go to Jesus, not to seek enjoyment, but *suffering*, to sacrifice and immolate ourselves to His good

pleasure. Let our love be pure, humble, disinterested, let us not ask, let us not even desire the ravishing visions and heavenly joys of Tabor; we may thankfully accept these, if Jesus grants them, but we should esteem ourselves still more highly-favoured, if He condescends to place upon our hearts that crown of thorns which once adorned His sacred brow: if He causes us to climb the steep ascent to Calvary in His sacred steps, and to partake with Him in the agony and sorrows of His abandonment upon the cross. It is sweet, indeed, to share in the joys of Jesus, but to suffer with Him and for Him is sweeter still; to receive from Him the consolations, the holy and ineffable joys of love, is a very great happiness, to offer Him the constancy, fidelity, and disinterested affection of suffering love is greater still, but the perfection of love is to be found in abandoning ourselves completely to the Beloved of our souls, and in humbly accepting whatever He is pleased to bestow upon us. Let us then drink meekly of the cup which Jesus presents to us, whether it be filled with honey or with gall, and let us accept all as good, which is offered to us by His Almighty Hand. Amen.

DISCOURSE WITH JESUS FOR THE FIRST DAY OF  
THE OCTAVE.

Why have I not the burning heart of an angel, to praise Thee with, my God and King, in the adorable mystery of the most Holy Eucharist? O, that I could praise Thee with the sweet, celestial accents of angelic love and thanksgiving! O,

most Holy Eucharist, Bread of life and immortality, sweet heavenly manna which is rained down daily into the desert of my life by the tender love of my God: Divine Gift, far above all others, my heart blesses, loves, and adores Thee, Thou only art my happiness, my treasure, and my celestial joy.

Earth is no longer to me a land of exile, since Jesus is pleased to inhabit it with me; it is no longer a vale of tears, for I find in it even now the joys of heaven. Here, at the foot of the altar, I find my true native country, and though my eyes are not yet permitted to contemplate the splendour of Thy glory, O Thou Sun of Justice, yet does my heart acknowledge Thy sacred presence, and bask in the sweet and vivifying warmth of Thy heavenly rays.

O, adorable Heart of my Jesus, centre and focus of inexhaustible charity, boundless ocean of love, abyss of mercy, divine inventor of the Holy Eucharist, graciously accept the homage of my gratitude, adoration and love; I am indeed unworthy and unable to praise and bless Thee aright, and when I endeavour to offer Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, my heart can only love.

This simple word, "*I love Thee*," is my thanksgiving, my petition and my prayer, graciously hear it, Oh, my Jesus, and believe that my poor heart is Thine, Thine only, and Thine always.

Thy love alone sufficeth me, O, my Jesus, Thou heavenly visitant to mortal earth, and without Thee nothing could suffice me. Riches, honours, pleasures, all these are nothing to me without the God of the most Holy Eucharist; but when I am

possessed of Him, how can poverty affect me, since I have obtained this eternal treasure of heaven? how can infirmities or sufferings afflict me, when in Jesus I enjoy eternal life? and how can human glory ever again excite my ambition, when the God of heaven descends even to my nothingness, to raise me up again to Himself? Ah, how trifling does this world and all its pleasures appear to me, my Saviour, when I regard them from my resting-place at Thy feet, its trivial greatness, its deceitful joys, and its false attractions, how powerless are they all to seduce the soul that has once tasted the joys of the Holy Eucharist!

How sublime, O Lord, is the excess of Thy love! Not only hast Thou condescended to dwell amongst us, to be our Guest, our Fellow-citizen, our Friend, and to have Thy dwelling-place in the midst of our dwellings; but Thou dost give Thyself to every one of us, Thou dost enter not alone into our houses but into our souls, Thou dost convert our hearts into Thy living tabernacles, Thy chalices, Thy ciboriums; Thou dost sanctify by Thy presence our joys and griefs; Thou dost identify Thyself with us, and live with us, our life in the days of our pilgrimage, that Thou mayest hereafter bring us to live Thy divine life with Thee eternally in heaven.

Thou dost condescend to dwell with us in these our days of sorrow, O my Jesus, that Thou mayest soothe our grief by Thy heavenly presence, that Thou mayest dry our tears and repose our hearts on Thine, and thus support and console them in every trial and grief. Thou dost come to dwell with us in this time of danger, to support

us by Thy strength, and to give us an assurance of victory by combating with us and for us.

Thou dost deign to be with us, ever with us to direct our steps, each one of us in Thy way; to be our guide and leader in this our journey to our eternal home, and when the evening of life is spent and gone, when our days are covered with the shadow of death, and time fades away in the light of a coming eternity, then Thou wilt still be there, O my Jesus, Thou wilt be there for the last time, to descend into the heart whose pulsations are soon to cease for ever, to sanctify its final aspirations, and to receive its last sighs.

It is true, then, O my Jesus, it is Thy delight to dwell with the children of men, and these words of infinite tenderness which Thou didst address to Thine apostles at Thy Last Supper, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," Thy Heart from the altar still repeats and addresses them to each one of Thy faithful souls. Yes, my Saviour, it is to us, it is to me, that Thou dost still address those sweet words, which so clearly depict the intensity of Thy love.

*"I have desired, not faintly, but with ardent longing and desire, to give Myself to you, to feed you with My body, to inebriate you with My Blood, to make you partakers of My eternal life."* Thou, O my God, Thou hast desired to give Thyself to me, to unite Thyself to me, notwithstanding my unworthiness, my sinfulness, and my ingratitude. Thou didst foresee this ingratitude of mine, as well as all the faults which I have committed or shall henceforth commit; and yet

nothing could deter Thee. To put Thy generous desires into execution, Thou didst traverse the infinite distance which separates Thine Eternal Being from nothingness, Thy sovereign greatness from my extreme misery. No sacrifice was too great for Thine ardent love to accomplish ; Thou didst pass through the vast degrees of space ; Thou didst overcome every obstacle to reach my soul, and even now, presenting to me Thy Sacred Heart, Thou dost seem to say, "Here is My Heart, open Thine to Me, I desire most ardently to enter it, to take My repose in it, and to possess it entirely."

"With desire I have desired." Who can understand, O my Jesus, the full force and signification of these words, which fell from Thy adorable lips ? Alas, to comprehend them fully we should need to comprehend the love of Thy Divine Heart, since Thy desire was in proportion to Thy love ; we should need to find another Jesus to comprehend the burning ardour of that Sacred Heart, and to know the intensity of that heavenly flame which Thou didst come to kindle upon earth, and which in its concentrated intensity caused Thee to experience the holy ardours of a love so great and marvellous that Thy poor creatures in hearing of it can but wonder and adore with grateful tears.

How then can we, who have thus been loved, remain any longer indifferent or insensible to the desires of a God ? How can we fail to desire most ardently the Heavenly Gift which Jesus offers for our acceptance ? Yes, I do desire Thee, O supreme and only Good ! My soul pants after

Thee, it sighs for Thee as the thirsty hart panteth after the water brooks, it desires Thee by night and by day, for Thou alone canst quench my thirst for happiness, and give me life eternal.

How foolish is the man, O Lord, who expects from the world that happiness which it never can bestow. Happiness is to be found in Thy presence alone; it awaits us at the foot of Thy altar, in the shadow of Thy tabernacles, and in vain does the worldling seek for it amongst earthly pleasures, draining with feverish avidity the cup of human enjoyment. This cup seems sweet to him, O my God, but its sweetness is deceptive, and the after-taste is bitterness itself. But the happiness which comes from Thee, O most loving God of the Holy Eucharist, is free from all deception or bitterness, its sweetness is without alloy, for Thy love gives all and more than all it promises, and the heart which has once tasted of these joys can never abide or desire the joys of earth.

But where can I find words to express the glories of Thy love, O my sweet Jesus? How is it that the world refuses to comprehend those chaste mysterious delights with which Thou dost inebriate the hearts of Thy chosen, those moments of happiness, all too rapid in their flight, when the soul is absorbed and lost in Thee, so that she forgets all things beside, even her own existence, when she knows no life but that which she enjoys in Thee, when she lives in the life of the Son of God, Who loved and gave Himself for her? But these are the mysteries of Thy love, O Divine

Spouse of my soul, and experience only can make these marvels known.

I desire, O my God, to seek my happiness in Thee alone. I pity the soul which seeks it elsewhere, which comprehends not that supreme felicity which consists in loving Thee, in being united to Thee, in feeling the beatings of Thy Sacred Heart upon her own. Yes, I pity the soul which seeks her hollow and deceitful joys in things of earth, I will not love with her love, nor do I desire to live her life. Better to bear the cross with Thee, O my Jesus, than to seek pleasures without Thee; better far to submit to the holy captivity of those who bear Thy easy yoke, and light burden, than to enjoy that false liberty which the world accords to its votaries; and if the Heavenly Bread of Thy Most Holy Eucharist must be purchased by some efforts and sacrifices, how can they seem hard to us when Thou dost condescend to be Thyself the reward of our labours?

O Mary Immaculate, thou whose heart, so loving and so pure, canst alone make a fitting return to our Jesus for all His love; thou who alone art able to comprehend the greatness of the Gift of God, bestowed upon us in the Most Holy Eucharist—that Gift which in restoring to thee at once the Child of Bethlehem, the young Workman of Nazareth, and the God-Man of Calvary—didst in one instant renew all thy maternal joys, suffer, O Mary, suffer one spark of that sacred fire of love wherewith thy soul was consumed for thy divine Son to fall upon my heart. And when, unworthy as I am, I venture to approach the heavenly



Feast, then, O tender Mother, behold my indigence, lend me what I am destitute of, that I may offer it to Jesus ; cover my soul with the virginal mantle of thine own innocence and purity, lend me, above all, thy heart to love Jesus, thy voice to praise Him, and thy gratitude to inspire my act of thanksgiving. Amen.

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## SECOND DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

### THE TRAITOR'S KISS.

“Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

#### I.—*The Traitor.*

The last words of the thanksgiving hymn were only just dying on the lips of our Divine Saviour, but already had the joys of the Eucharistic banquet faded, and floods of bitter sadness invaded the soul of the Son of Man. The great work of love was now accomplished, and God, who in the upper chamber had created for Himself a new sphere of existence, to ensure us against losing Him, even in this vale of tears, was now to meet His death. But why is Jesus sad, and why is His Heart oppressed with grief? What is the sword of sorrow which pierces His soul, and draws from Him those mournful words: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death?” Can it be that our adorable Saviour regrets this Gift which He has but now bestowed upon us ; or is it the prospect of approaching death that fills Him with

terror and affright? Ah, no! the Heart of Jesus cannot repent of its love; what He has already done for us He is ready to do again; He does not dread the moment in which that awful Sacrifice is to be accomplished, and He goes willingly to meet His death.

If we desire to know why the Heart of our Lord and Master is so sad, let us count the number of the apostles who accompanied Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. They were twelve at the Eucharistic Banquet, but eleven only surround the Master at this moment. These eleven, it is true, surround with respectful tenderness, Him who has given them Himself, and who is not only in the midst of their ranks, but also dwells at the bottom of their hearts; they twine around Him the bands of their love, as if to cling to Him more closely than before; and their hearts, filled with the ineffable joys of their First Communion, can render Him due thanks only by the eloquent silence of their gratitude and love. Jesus delights in the tender affection of these His faithful friends; it is true, He well knows that soon the storm will burst which shall disperse them on all sides, and that their fidelity will not be proof against the fearful trial of His Cross and Passion; but He knows also that their guilty desertion will be repaired by a prompt return, that this fleeting moment of cowardice and weakness will be followed by a lifelong and glorious reparation, and by a fidelity as resolute as constant. The Heart of Jesus will be pained by their desertion, but He pardons them beforehand, for He knows that they are not lost to Him, that they will quickly return, and that,

even if human weakness causes them to flee in the time of danger, their hearts still remain firm in their allegiance of love.

But alas, it is far different in the case of him who is now absent, it is this which brings the cloud of sadness upon Jesus' brow, for the twelfth apostle, who did not even await the conclusion of the heavenly Banquet to desert his Lord and Master, is a traitor who will never more return. In vain will the love of his Divine Lord pursue him even unto the end; he will not comprehend the depths of His mysterious love; he will die impenitent, despairing of that pardon which the goodness of His offended Master was most desirous to bestow. Judas, with that adorable Blood which he had joined with the other apostles in drinking from the blessed cup still red upon his lips—Judas, who had thus found death where his fellows had received eternal life, who had drunk hatred from the very Fount of Love, and had been the first impious sacrilegious profaner of the most Holy Eucharist—Judas went out hastily to sell that Adorable Blood of which he had been so unworthy a partaker, to the enemies and murderers of his Lord and his God.

This then was the sharp thorn which tore and pierced the Heart of our Lord so cruelly, this was the bitter sorrow which mingled with the heavenly joys of His infinite charity, and which, far more grievous to Him than the torments and death which was hourly drawing near, drew from Him this bitter cry, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." Oh, how bitter was this grief

to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to find Himself not only abandoned, but betrayed and *sold* by the apostle, the friend in whom He had reposed His confidence, to whom He had entrusted His secrets and His power, by communicating to him the gift of miracles. To be betrayed and sold into the hands of His enemies by one whom He had loved more tenderly than the mother loves her child, whom He had loaded with favours, raised to the sublime dignity of the apostleship, destined to shine as a star in the clear heaven of His Church on earth, and to be raised hereafter to a dwelling-place in glory unspeakable, close to that throne of light and glory upon which He was Himself so soon to take His seat. Oh, how severe must have been the sufferings of our Saviour's Heart! To see one fall so low whom He had raised to such a high estate; to receive bitter hatred in exchange for such tender love; to see a soul which He had destined to become one of the pillars of His Church, and perhaps to occupy the throne of the chief of the fallen angels in heaven, sink into the uttermost depths of the bottomless abyss, and become the sport and footstool of Satan, how bitter must have been this sight! But before we can form any idea of the sorrow of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we should be able to comprehend His love to souls. The more tenderly He has loved any particular soul, the more earnestly He has laboured for its welfare, and enriched it with His gifts, the more deeply will He grieve over its loss, so that the sorrow of a mother who should behold her only son inflict a mortal wound upon himself in her very presence,

without being able to lift a hand or utter a word to avert his fate, would be a feeble image only of that which is inflicted upon Jesus by the loss of one single soul which He has given His life to redeem. What then must have been His sufferings when the soul in question was the soul of an apostle, and when it had been the object of His tenderest kindness, the recipient of the exhaustless treasures of His liberality and love.

## II.

It is not only the sorrow which the perfidy of His beloved apostle has inflicted upon the soul of Jesus that drives Him with such bitter weeping into the grotto of Gethsemane; it is also the crime which Judas has committed that weighs so heavily upon His soul, and bows Him down with shame in the presence of His Father's infinite holiness. Ah, if His sorrow and His tears could touch the guilty heart of him who was once His friend, if that hardened soul were willing to accept the grace of repentance, O how joyfully would Jesus consent to endure, for his salvation alone, the sufferings which He must soon undergo for the redemption of the whole world! But no, it cannot be. Jesus well knows that the offers of His grace and bounty will be of no avail; that before the sun, which is even now dawning in the east, shall sink below the horizon, before even His own Sacrifice of Blood shall be fully consummated, Judas will have passed from the kingdom of mercy to the awful dominion of jus-

tice, and that He who would have been his Saviour, and is now compelled to become His Judge, will have pronounced upon his guilty head the decree of eternal reprobation.

Jesus retires into the grotto of His Agony, He prostrates Himself with His face resting upon the ground, and seems to sink under the weight of His enormous grief. Ah, we cannot believe that the treason of Judas was the *only* cause of this bitter sorrow; but doubtless it was one of the most bitter drops in that chalice of woe and suffering which He prayed His Father to avert from His lips. We cannot doubt that at this solemn season our Redeemer's most pure soul was overwhelmed with terror and with grief unspeakable, as He beheld the foul torrent of human crimes, the accumulated iniquities of the whole human race, rush in upon its unsullied virgin surface. That pure and holy soul which was filled to overflowing with Divine light and knowledge, which penetrated all the mysteries of evil, and was cognizant of all crimes, past, present, and to come, must have experienced mortal anguish in feeling the heavy load of all those iniquities with which the world had been defiled from the time of Adam's first sin to those which were hereafter to pour on in a dark and foul stream, exciting the wrath of God, and demanding justice of His Heavenly Father, even to the consummation of the last ages of the world. The peculiar malice which attended the perpetration of each sin was also known to Him, and the sorrow which His holy soul endured at the sight of all these crimes was fully proportioned to the intensity of their

guilt. Like those vast and rapid rivers which discharge themselves with such impetus into the sea that their streams rush through the mighty deep and never mingle with its waters, so did the sins of the whole human race, and of each member of it in particular, pour their foul torrent through our Saviour's spotless soul, never sullyng in the slightest degree its infinite purity, but still subjecting it to endure, in full and complete integrity, all that pain and shame and horror which should have been endured by every one of us, in just punishment of our own sins.

On whichever side He casts His woeful glance, He still beholds nought but the torrents of iniquity which rush in from all sides upon His most pure soul ; but of all the crimes which thus oppress His adorable Heart there is one which weighs heavier than all, it is a burden which bows Him to the very ground. This is the sin of Judas ; it is that traitorous sacrilegious kiss which will ere long be bestowed upon Him, and which will so often be renewed in the course of the Eucharistic life of our adorable Lord. Alas, during those three hours of mortal agony, Jesus numbered many who would follow in the steps of Judas ; in that fearful vision He beheld the long procession of those sacrilegious profaners of His adorable Body and Blood, pass in sad array before Him, each one of them bringing his odious tribute of hypocrisy and deceit ; He beheld them bow the knee before Him, and at the same time aim a mortal dart of ingratitude at His Heart ; while under the semblance of reverence and love they compel Him to take up His abode in a soul sullied by mortal sin,

and even inhabited by the devil himself. Ah, this is indeed the most horrible of all crimes in the pure eyes of the Lord, it inspires Him with the most intense repugnance, for if all other kinds of sin offend His infinite *holiness*, this offends His *love*, and attacks His Sacred Heart; it is His *Heart* which it lacerates, His *love* which it despises and contemns. And we all know well that the most severe sufferings which rend our own hearts are those which are caused by the ingratitude of those we love, no grief so hard to bear, so bitter to endure as this.

We are so stained and soiled with sin from the very first instant of our conception, our intelligence is so narrow and confined, conceiving so vague and inadequate an idea of God and His perfections, that we conceive a slight superficial horror of sin, we comprehend little of its enormity and malice, and when we have been betrayed into its commission we feel little regret, and our sorrow is quickly banished by the distractions of life and the instability and lightness of our natural disposition. But with the Saviour it was far otherwise; His pure and loving soul, closely united to the Divinity, and gifted with far more light and love than the most exalted angel of all the heavenly host, beheld sin unveiled in all its naked deformity and horror; He hated it with infinite hatred, grieved over it with sorrow equal to the hatred with which it inspired Him, a sorrow so great that it must have deprived Him of life had He not worked a miracle in order to preserve it. Is it surprising that Jesus, Who was innocence and holiness personified, when the heavy load of all



our crimes, of all human iniquities, was laid upon Him by His Father, should sink in agony and shame, groaning under the weight of this burden of misery, far more heavy and overwhelming than the weight of all the worlds which He sustains in space by the power of His Almighty Hand?

### III.

But while Jesus in His agony wrestles with death, and while the drops of His Bloody Sweat fall to the ground, Judas, the traitor Judas, fills up the measure of his iniquity. He left the table of Love with hatred and rage in his heart, and following the guidance of Satan, who inspired him with his own rage and fury, he went in search of the enemies of His Divine Master, and sold into their hands that Sacred Blood which he had so lately profaned. He bargained long with them, and the price of that Blood is well known to every one. For the price of the vilest slave did he sell the Lord of heaven and earth, the ransom of the whole human race! he sets the value of thirty deniers as the price of that most precious life, the sacrifice of which is destined to set free the wretched slaves of the devil.

This miserable man proceeds from crime to crime: he has profaned that heavenly gift which his Master's love conferred upon him, as well as upon his companions in the apostleship; he has sold that inestimable treasure which is now his own no longer, and henceforth the mask is raised, no power can restrain his progress to evil, his

unblushing forehead, his degraded soul, are not even susceptible of the feeling of shame. He is going to betray his Master, to betray Him by a kiss, and by that symbol of love to point Him out to those who have designs, not only on His liberty, but His life. You may hear him saying to them, "Whosoever I shall kiss, that same is He." That, as if he said: That is your Victim; that is He whom you are to load with chains; to bring as a criminal before your high priests, to be judged and condemned to death. Watch him, then, as he puts himself at the head of his Master's enemies, and conducts them to the place where he knows Him to have retired to pray to His Father in Heaven. O heavens! an apostle, a friend of Jesus, marching at the head of His enemies, bringing into His presence a host, not of worshippers, but of executioners; remembering no more the love which he had received, the favours, the benefits with which he had been loaded; making the sacrifice of everything, resigning everything, his God, his soul, his eternity, to the gratification of a contemptible passion. In truth, it seems as if his heart had been taken possession of by a thousand demons, and drawn by ten thousand devils with frightful rapidity to the brink of that fearful abyss which he is now so quickly descending.

And now the troop which is conducted by the traitor has reached the Garden of Gethsemane; the silence of the night is broken by their steps; they advance cautiously, like a hunter who fears lest the prey which he hopes to surprise might take the alarm and make its escape. But Jesus,

from whom no secret is hidden, does not attempt to flee from His enemies; far from endeavouring to escape, He rises and advances to meet them, with feeble steps indeed, for He is well-nigh exhausted by the conflict which has been waged within Him, but yet with a Heart still burning with fervent love. It is not the peril in which His own life stands which occupies His thoughts at this eventful moment; no, it is the desire of saving His miserable betrayer. Oh, if he could only open his heart to repentance, said the loving Heart of Jesus, if My love can even yet triumph over his hatred, how much less bitter would be that cup which I must now drink! How joyfully should I shed for him that Blood which he has delivered up into the hands of men! And the heart of Judas muttered audibly to itself: "He knows my plot; if by an act of His almighty power, by such an act as I have often witnessed, He defeats my plans, and deprives me of the reward of my treason, how wretched I shall be."

Jesus comes forth, pale, exhausted, His brow still covered with the bloody sweat of His dreadful agony. He comes forth to meet those who are seeking for Him; will the traitor even yet be melted at that piteous sight? Alas, Judas has now reached that point in wickedness at which nothing can move or touch him; his soul is dead, and the dead can feel no more. His master's deadly paleness, His exhaustion, that appearance of suffering and resignation, which should have rendered Him more dear than ever to his heart, or might at least awaken in him some feeling of remorse, has no power to touch him now, he

sighs not, he trembles not, as he calmly inclines his face to Jesus, and kisses His sacred cheek, saying at the same time, "Hail, Master." This infamous perfidious treachery, of which the thought alone had been enough to cause our Blessed Lord to tremble and to faint, now drove the sharp sword of grief and suffering deep into His inmost soul; but He did not turn away His head to avoid that sacrilegious kiss. His pure and adorable lips were for an instant pressed to those which but a few minutes before had unclosed to pronounce those horrible words, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He, take Him and lead Him away safely." Jesus opened His arms to the traitor, He pressed him to His Sacred breast, hoping, perhaps, even then to retain him there, to bring him back to that loving Heart which still beat with desire to save him. He did not even refuse the sweet name of friend to this unworthy apostle, who had become the leader of His enemies, but with a voice more sweet and touching than ever before, He said to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Judas withdraws himself from that last embrace of His Divine Master, for his hardened heart is still insensible to all His kindness and love. Then our Blessed Lord makes one last attempt to recover His lost apostle; he is inaccessible to love, perhaps he will even yet be accessible to fear. Turning to the troop of armed men who now press rudely around Him, Jesus asks them, "What seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they reply. "I am He," replies Jesus, simply, but

these few words, pronounced with all the majesty of Godhead, drove them backward so that they fell to the ground, and Judas with them, as if they had been struck by a thunderbolt from heaven.

The traitor rose from the ground, but he did not repent. He did not perceive that, though his Divine Master could, by a single act of His will, reduce him to annihilation, or precipitate him into the vast abyss, yet that He now spared him, and preserved his life for the purpose of granting him time to reflect, and to efface his crime by a sincere and humble repentance. But in vain did the mercy and love of his injured Master surround him on every side; he ignored them both, and when he had satisfied his thirst for gold, when he had received the reward of his treason, then were his eyes opened to behold the enormity of his crime. Then it was not repentance, but remorse and despair, which entered into his soul; he did not fly to take refuge at the foot of his Master's cross, he did not call to mind that He who hung upon that fearful tree had His arms outstretched to receive all the sinners of the universe; he listened to nothing but the voice of the father of lies, who incessantly repeated in his ears that there could be no pardon for such a wretch as he, and thus, consummating the fearful catalogue of his crimes by the sin of despair, which alone is unpardonable, he put an end by suicide to a life which he might even yet have sanctified by the tears of repentance, and which the infinite mercy of his loving Redeemer might have accepted and blessed.

IV.—*The Second Judas.*

Eighteen centuries have rolled their course over the glorious sepulchre of Christ, but the fatal celebrity of crime still lingers round the name of the traitor who betrayed Him, and as each successive generation of the race of mankind, who were redeemed on Calvary, come to bend the knee before their Saviour's cross, and pay their devotions at the glorious place of His rest, they fail not to remember with loathing and execration the name of that apostle who betrayed and sold his Divine Master. Yes, the name of Judas must ever arouse in every truly pious heart a feeling of intense horror and contempt. This feeling is just, and honourable to human nature; but why does not the repetition of his crime inspire us with as much horror as the name of its first perpetrator? Alas, it is a most distressing thought, but the truth must be acknowledged: there are more Judases in the world than is generally supposed, for that adorable Blood, which was poured forth for our redemption, is even now daily profaned by the followers of its first profaner; it is bought and sold for the satisfaction of some paltry passion, some trifling gratification, like the thirty talents which the arch-traitor received for the betrayal of his God. Daily thus does the God of the Holy Eucharist behold the repetition of that sacrilegious kiss which pierced His Heart in the Garden of Gethsemane with such bitter grief.

To communicate unworthily, to approach the most sacred of all sacraments in a state of mortal

sin, is, we cannot doubt, a crime as great, as odious as that which was committed by Judas when he betrayed and sold his Divine Master. This crime, it is true, does not condemn its guilty perpetrator to shame and infamy irreparable, for it is committed in the silence and secrecy of the heart; and this other Judas may walk abroad with erected head, and proud bearing, covered with the mantles of hypocritical virtue, safe from the contempt which he has so richly deserved. But were he surrounded by the esteem and veneration of the whole world, the voice of his own conscience would not fail to protest against such unmerited homage, and his Master's eye will rest upon him as reproachfully as it once did upon that unhappy apostle whose name alone sends a shudder of horror through our frames. And in fact, it is evident that the person who deliberately profanes the holy Eucharist is no less guilty than Judas, for he is a Christian, and consequently a child of God and the Church, a brother, a friend of Jesus, a soul, perhaps, chosen by Him to be the object of a preferential love, admitted frequently to His table, and favoured with special graces. Long, perhaps, has that unhappy soul walked in the paths of innocence, piety, and peace, following the steps of Jesus in that narrow way which leadeth unto life. But a day of trial has come, and it has been found wanting, perhaps it has failed in vigilance, or perhaps it has suffered the germ of some little passion to find entrance there; by degrees this passion, like some poisonous plant, strikes deep root into his heart; it grows and flourishes apace, and all

those fair flowers of virtue which formerly embellished and perfumed that soul, fade under its baleful shade; the love of Jesus is quickly stifled there, delicacy of conscience and the fair lily of innocence are amongst the first to perish; sin is no longer the only evil to be dreaded, the only misery worthy to be deeply deplored, it is no longer the fearful thing he once considered it to be, and too soon, alas! it becomes a familiar object. Then all which was hitherto regarded with horror and repugnance, becomes lovely and desirable in the estimation of this unhappy soul, the hideous countenance of vice is concealed from view under the gay mask of pleasure, and that passion which was once its favourite toy, but which is now become its tyrant, impels it to sacrifice Jesus anew; it asks at first, as Judas did, "What will you give me, if I deliver Him unto you?" I will give you gold, pleasures, honours, the cherished passion replies; the soul hesitates yet a little longer, it bargains for its God with sin, but ere long Satan, that most powerful auxiliary of all the sinful passions, takes part with that particular one which is dominant in this miserable soul, he promises liberty, happiness, all kinds of earthly joy, and soon do these deceitful whisperings stifle the still clear voice of grace, which strives, though here, alas! in vain, to arouse salutary remorse, and to awaken the drugged and sleeping conscience, the still small voice which cries in his ear, Pause here, go not a step further to thy ruin, for those fair enticing flowers do but hide a deep and deadly abyss; once let thy foot rest upon that treacherous grassy slope, and rapid will be the



descent which shall conduct thee to thine eternal ruin.

And Jesus also speaks to this erring soul, in sweetest tones of love, He invites it to recal the memory of past days of innocence, of the holy joys of religion, the heavenly delights of His love. He calls that soul and calls again by His own secret inspirations, as well as by the voice of its spiritual guide. But it is blinded by its prevailing passion, deaf to remorse of conscience, to the inspirations of grace, and to the charitable warnings of its superiors; it desires but one thing, the gratification of its passion, and earthly desires, and to obtain that satisfaction it turns a deaf ear to the voice of conscience and of the Church: it endeavours to hide from its spiritual father, the fearful ravages which sin has committed, it passes its offences over in silence, and deceives him by a feigned submission and repentance. Like Judas in the presence of the other apostles, it wishes to appear the friend of Jesus, when it is already His most deadly enemy, when it has sold its Lord to Satan and crucified Him afresh by its sins.

And when this first act of sacrilege has been committed, it is not likely that the soul will shrink from its completion by a second. Ah, no; for, alas! crime encourages to crime, and this soul has retired from the salutary waters of penance in a state still more defiled than before it entered that laver of purity. Jesus has not only knelt at its feet to wash them, as He did to His apostles before they were called to partake of that heavenly Feast, He has not poured water upon

her to purify her, but He has shed His own cleansing Blood, by the hands of His minister, upon that impenitent soul, and she has trodden under foot the adorable Blood of Jesus, and now, with bended knee and hands devoutly clasped, she dares to come and offer the kiss of Judas to her Divine Master, to the most meek and gentle God of the holy Eucharist.

For it is always with every outward appearance of respect and love that the sacrilegious person assumes his place at the Sacred Feast; and it is while he appears to adore his Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist that he betrays Him into the hands of His most cruel enemy the devil, that he imprisons Him in a heart which is inhabited by that impure spirit, and foul and stained with sin. What horrible profanation, what fearful perfidy is this! Can any words be strong enough to express our horror and indignation at those who can commit a crime so horrible and so grievous to our dear Lord?

O my sweet Jesus, what fearful ingratitude is this, to make this wonderful master-piece and crowning glory of Thy love an occasion of inflicting upon Thee the most cruel outrage, the most fearful insult that can be conceived; of wringing anew Thy Sacred Heart with anguish, and renewing, as far as it lies in our power so to do, all the sufferings of Thy Passion, all the tortures and ignominy of Thy Crucifixion!

How terrified, how indignant should we be, if, during the celebration of the holy mysteries, some vile robber were to ascend the steps of the altar, after the consecration, and snatching the

Sacred Chalice from the hands of the officiating priest, pour the Sacred Blood upon the floor of the sanctuary, and trample under foot the Consecrated Host! Ah, we should be ready to shed floods of tears over such an outrage as this; we should bring offerings of love and praise unceasingly to our Jesus to make reparation for an insult so distressing. But, far greater than the crime of such a sacrilegious robber is the crime of a soul which communicates unworthily, which mingles the Precious Blood of our redemption with the miry slime of sin, and forcibly brings the Holy of Holies into the tabernacle of a heart which is already inhabited by the evil one, and stained with mortal sin.

How horrified should we be with an ungrateful child, or rather a little monster of ingratitude, who, being the sole object of his mother's tenderest affection, should calmly await the moment when she was hastening to welcome his return to her bosom, to press him in her loving arms, and overwhelm him with affectionate caresses, and just as her arms were opened to fold him to her heart, should drive a dagger deep into her maternal bosom, and lay her bathed in blood at his feet! We tremble at the very thought of such a fearful crime, and yet still greater is the ingratitude, blacker yet the perfidy, of that sacrilegious offender who takes advantage of the moment in which Jesus comes to him, overflowing with ardent love, and ready to enrich him with all His grace, to unite Himself to him, and to load him with the tenderest caresses; who makes use, I say, of that occasion to pierce His heart with a

sword, and to crucify Him anew in his own sinful soul, upon a cross far more ignominious than that upon which His Blood flowed forth on Calvary.

## V.

Does Jesus feel the treason which is committed by the Judas of our own day less acutely, less deeply, than that which was committed eighteen hundred years ago by His unworthy Apostle? Is He less offended by their crime? or is He less kindly disposed towards them, less disposed to pardon these later offenders, than the first great traitor who sold Him into the hands of His enemies? Ah! no; the offence is the same as his, and the mercy is the same also. Jesus is indeed grievously offended, He feels the injury and the wound, but His Heart is still the same; and in the God of the Holy Eucharist we find as much meekness, as much pity for the offender and earnest desire for his salvation, as in the Man of Sorrows in the Garden of Gethsemani.

And while from His hiding-place in the tabernacle, Jesus addresses to those who, with souls stained and defiled by sin, present themselves at His Holy Table, the same words as He formerly addressed to Judas, "My friend, wherefore art thou come, why betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" He still withholds the arm of the angel of the sanctuary, who burns to avenge the insult offered to his Lord, and forbids him to lift his destroying arm against the sacrilegious profaner of the most holy of all mysteries. By one

act of His Divine Will, Jesus could annihilate and precipitate into the lowest abyss of the eternal vengeance that profane and sacrilegious person. But He lays aside the sword of justice, He remembers only mercy. He listens to no cry of vengeance, He hears only the voice of His own love, which implores Him to spare and save the sinner. And when the clouds of the wrath of God hang thick and dark over the sinner's head, when the tempest lowers, and the awful thunderbolt of Divine Justice trembles in the hand of the Lord of Hosts, who is ready to execute righteous judgment upon the offender, then does Jesus still interpose between them, He renews His sacrifice, • He offers Himself again upon the altar, and the Blood which was profaned speaketh better things than that of Abel: it cries aloud, not for vengeance, but for MERCY.

Alas ! and will this unhappy man profit by the time which is accorded him by the infinite love and mercy of his outraged Lord ? Will he make a better use of it than was made by that most wretched apostle, whose worthy imitator he has now become ? Communion received unworthily, hardens and blinds the heart, it is too often the first step to final impenitence. One sacrilege paves the way for another, and when remorse follows in the train of satisfied passion, and fills the place of that peace and happiness which the soul had fondly expected to reap from its gratification, when the eyes of the guilty one are opened, and he sees the fearful profundity of his fall, the utter depth of his ignominy, then shame and fear take full possession of his soul. Shame for his fearful sin,

fear of an offended God. The devil, who once led him to presume upon the *mercy* of God, now strives with all his might to sink his soul in utter despair, he shows him his crime in such dark colours, that he can no longer hope ever to obtain its forgiveness. And when remorse and terror agitate the soul of this unhappy being, when he flies to the feet of the priest, and is inspired by grace to cry with sighing and tears, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the Innocent Man, then does Satan place his accursed hand upon his mouth to prevent him from confessing his sin and grief, he fills the wretched man with false shame, which stifles his acknowledgment, which stops the way to conversion and repentance, leads him to commit sacrilege upon sacrilege, and hurries him onwards to the abyss of despair and final impenitence.

Ah, if any poor souls read these words, who have been so unhappy as to fall into such an awful sin as this, let me at least beseech them to take courage, to repent and rise again. Unhappy souls, your fault is great indeed, but the door of mercy is still open to you.

Do not imitate Judas to the end, do not copy him in refusing to believe in your Master's tenderness and love, do not refuse the pardon which He freely offers, and which His loving Heart implores you to receive. Your fault is great: but it is smaller far than the mercy of your Lord, your crime is not unpardonable, and it will only be offering another outrage, still more insulting to Jesus than that which you have already committed, if you suffer yourself to fall into despair. The

Heart which your ingratitude has wounded, has never once ceased to love you ; break then your own stony heart by sincere repentance, fly with all speed to the healing waters of penance, drive away that false shame, which would stifle the confession of your sins, ere it issues from your lips, and thus cause you to commit many others, casting you once more into that fearful abyss from which you are hardly rising, and may never rise again. No, I entreat you, heed not this false shame, but accept necessary and legitimate shame as a fitting expiation for your sins. When your heart is crushed and broken by repentance, how little will you heed the confusion and humiliation which you must needs feel !

Confess to the minister of God *all* the grievous wounds of your poor soul, suffer him to wound it to its very depths. Is he not also the minister of mercy, the messenger of God, who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather his conversion and salvation ? Lay down then meekly at the feet of the priest, that burden which weighs so heavily upon your soul : and then will that sweet peace which has been so long a stranger to your soul, return once more to soothe it with its heavenly balm, then will your heart, so long dried up and withered by remorse, be watered and refreshed by the tears of repentance. Those tears, mingled with the Adorable Blood of Jesus, will wash you clean, they will efface every spot and stain of sin from your soul, and invested with the white robe of innocence, you may once more come without fear to join in the Feast of angels. Jesus awaits you there, but not with reproaches.

Did He reproach the apostle who denied Him, and wept bitter tears for his fault during the remainder of his life? His arms are open to receive you; He turns with eager desire to press you to His Heart, to give you the kiss of peace, to console you, to wipe away all your tears, and to say to you from His inmost Heart, "My child, I have never ceased to love you, and now I beseech you to love Me more than those to whom I have forgiven less!"

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE  
SECOND DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

Where shall I find a fountain of tears, O my adorable Saviour, to weep for the outrages which Thou dost receive in this sacrament of Thy love? How can I find a reparation to offer Thee, equal to the insults which Thou dost receive? It is Thy Heart which is thus outraged, O my Jesus! it is Thy love which is thus contemned, Thy Body and Thy Blood which are trampled under foot. And it is Thine own people, that people which has reposed under Thy protection, and in whose favour Thou hast shown forth the greatest wonders of Thy power, that thus forsake Thee, betray Thy cause, and take part with Thine inveterate enemies. They are Thine own children, who thus betray Thee and wound Thy Heart by their perfidy and ingratitude: the children of Thy love whom Thou hast cherished in Thy bosom, and nourished with Thy most Precious blood: whom Thou hast fondled and caressed as a tender mother loves and



caresses her firstborn son: these are Thy betrayers, O my Saviour! Was it not enough that a Judas should betray Thee, my sweet Jesus? Was not that cup which Thou didst drain to the dregs as bitter as grief and suffering could make it: but must the souls whom Thou dost daily load with kindness and favours infuse new gall and bitterness into the chalice of Thine Agony?

Forgive, I beseech Thee, O sacred Heart of my Saviour, those who are guilty of this most horrible crime. Forgive them, O Heart of infinite mercy, for they know not what they do. Remember that Thou hast wept tears of blood, in reparation of their crimes, that Thou hast borne their shame, and made satisfaction for their guilt to the Divine Justice, and deign by the agonies of Thy sacred Heart, by Thy bloody sweat, by Thy bitter passion, to grant them time for repentance, and the grace of a sincere conversion.

Accept, O my Jesus, as some little compensation to Thy loving Heart, for all these shameful outrages and insults, the love of all those souls who are devoted to Thee with most pure and fervent affection, accept their homage, their acts of reparation, and their frequent, fervent communions. Behold their zeal and ardent desire to render Thee love for love, to gain all the hearts of men to Thy service, that they may be bound to the horns of Thy altars, by the words of gratitude and love.

Behold our weakness, our powerlessness, O Lord, and that we may be enabled to offer Thee a reparation less unworthy of Thy love, suffer us to draw upon the treasures of Thy holy Church, and

to offer to Thee, in the spirit of reparation, the love of all the saints who have loved Thee most on earth : their zeal for the holy Eucharist, their heroic acts of virtue, and all the deeds of love which they have performed for Thy glory. Remember Thy martyrs' courage, O Lord. Remember the blood they shed for Thee, and suffer their constancy and fidelity to make amends for the ingratitude and cowardly infidelity of those for whom we desire to make reparation. Remember, also, O my Jesus, the zeal of Thy confessors, the weary labours of Thine apostles, the purity of Thy virgins, the holy austerities and mortifications of Thy penitents, and let the constant love of all Thy saints lay some balm to the aching wound in Thy Sacred Heart, and cause Thy mercies to descend upon those poor sinners for whom we pray.

But suffer, above all, O Lord, that we may offer unto Thee, as the only reparation which can be a truly worthy one, the ardent love of the Immaculate Heart of Thine august Mother ; her devoted attachment, her holy transports, the sacred ecstasies of love with which her heart is for ever inflamed for Thee, O my Lord and my God. Remember, O Lord, the care which she bestowed upon Thee in Thy sacred Infancy, her sorrows at the foot of the cross, her tears, her heart-rending grief ; remember, above all, the purity and burning love with which she received Thee daily in Thy most Holy Eucharist after Thy ascension : and in the name of the virginal innocence of Thy most Blessed Mother, in the name of her immaculate purity, of her maternal tenderness, pardon those for

whom we implore Thy clemency, and touch the hearts of those poor sinners who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, are still the children of Mary, and whose names are not yet effaced from her heart.

But, above all, listen, O my Saviour, to the voice of Thine own mercy and love, which still speaks in favour of these guilty ones. Their names are not written in the heart of Mary alone; but Thou hast graven them in Thy hands, in Thy feet, and in Thine own heart, in characters of blood; regard not these sinners, O my Saviour, save through the medium of Thy wounds, and let Thine only vengeance be the wounding of their hearts with the arrows of Thy love, that they may be sweetly forced to love Thee, and that the tears of sincere repentance may be drawn abundantly from their eyes.

Join your reparations, too, with ours, O ye angelic spirits, who surround the tabernacle and the altar of our Lord; ye who come to contemplate in the annihilation of the Eucharist, that same God whose glory and majesty you behold in heaven; and whilst you adore, in ecstasies of burning love, the Lord who gives Himself on earth as food for guilty man, ah, weep with us over the insults which our heavenly Guest receives when He visits us in our lonely exile: but restrain your just indignation, strike not with the sword of most righteous vengeance those sinners who profane the most holy of all mysteries; but, O pray for them, suggest your holy inspirations to their souls, excite repentance in their hearts of stone; bring them contrite and ashamed to the feet of the

Dweller in the tabernacle, and return not to your thrones of light in heaven, until you have bound them fast to the altar by the sweet chains of love.

But in making the *amende honorable* to Thee for our erring brethren, O my Jesus, let us not forget that we are also guilty ourselves, that, like them, we have often caused sorrow to Thy Sacred Heart by our lukewarmness, our insensibility, our indifference to the greatest of Thy many benefits. Look favourably, O Lord, upon our deep repentance, and pardon the distractions from which we have suffered in Thy presence, the communions made with scanty preparation, and from which we have gained no fruit: pardon us for our want of zeal in visiting Thee in the sacrament of Thy love, our haste to leave Thee, our want of devotion in Thy sacred presence, and our carelessness in neglecting the diligent acquirement of those virtues which would have adorned us more fitly to meet our heavenly Guest. Pardon us also for the facility with which we have fallen back into those faults which we had most solemnly promised to avoid, and for our want of zeal and courage in the performance of those little sacrifices which Thy grace has so frequently in Holy Communion prompted us to perform. Behold our humble repentance, O Lord, it is deep, it is sincere, and we are ready and desirous, by the help of Thy grace, to make reparation for our past ingratitude by the ardent love and constant fidelity of our future lives.

O Blessed Mary, Virgin most compassionate, whose heart was filled with sorrow and bitterness by

the treason of Judas, thou who didst pray for him, and wouldst have reconciled him with thy Divine Son, if he had come to thy feet to weep for his crime, and to implore thy powerful mediation, have pity, O Mary, upon all those poor sinners who have followed in his fatal steps, suffer not those souls to perish whom thy Son has purchased with His Precious Blood, be their refuge and their mother; for, however guilty a child may be, his mother has always bowels of mercy for the son of her love, therefore, O sweet Virgin, be thou their refuge and their help, and save them at once from the abyss of despair, and from the abyss of eternal damnation. Extend also to us thy protecting hand, preserve us for ever from the guilt of making a sacrilegious communion, and obtain from God that we may be cut off in the midst of our days, rather than that the sun should ever arise upon that day in which we should commit so horrible a crime. Amen.

## THIRD DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

## THE DIVINE PRISONER.

"I was in prison, and you visited Me."

I.—*The Debtor.*

I considered, yesterday, my God betrayed by an apostle, and sold for a slave; this day, a new mystery of love is opened to my thoughts, and in the course of the Gospel history, I find my Lord a captive, arrested by the soldiers, loaded with chains, bound and imprisoned like a common malefactor. What means this new and wondrous prodigy? the Creator become the prisoner of His creature: the Sovereign Being who is independent of all things, and by whom all things subsist, deprived of liberty by His subjects; the Holy of Holies treated like a criminal, bound and led away by a troop of malefactors, who load Him with revilings and false accusations before the tribunals of the city of Jerusalem; the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead summoned before the tribunal of an earthly judge, and subjected to the operation of the justice of men!

My dazzled reason shrinks aghast before this mystery of ignominy and abasement; and were I to behold the earth trembling from its foundation, the sun extinguished in space, and the world returning to its original nothingness, I should feel

less astonished than in thus beholding the Creator of worlds in subjection to His creature, and that creature daring to lay hands on his Creator, and bring Him into captivity ; but if my reason is confounded, my faith bows in humility and adoration ; it points me to Jesus and says, "*He loved thee and gave Himself for thee.*"

Yes, my Saviour's love explains it all, it gives me the key to all those mysteries of humiliation in which I contemplate Him, both in His Passion and in the Holy Eucharist. It is for me that He submits to these humiliations ; if He is a Captive, it is that He may restore me to liberty ; if He dies, it is to give me eternal life ; if in His innocence He is loaded with chains, it is for my guilt ; if He is the unresisting Victim of the justice of men, it is because He is bearing for me the weight of the justice of God.

Jesus is pure, innocent, holy, and almighty, He is perfectly free and independent, and if He does not make use of His power to escape from the hands of His enemies, if He willingly stretches forth His sacred Hands to be tied behind His back, if He turns not away His face from shame and spitting, it is because His Father's justice has issued a decree against Him, to which He submits with meek obedience, and He considers the actors in this fearful tragedy only in the light of passive instruments in the hands of His Heavenly Father, for the accomplishment of His adorable designs. But what has Jesus done ? What can the Divine Justice find to avenge in this meek Lamb of God ? This is what He has done, as I said before, He has loved us, and given Himself for us.

That which the justice of God now seeks to avenge in Him, is not His own crimes, but the weight of our iniquities, which He has taken upon Himself, and for which God's justice will exact a full and rigid satisfaction. By means of sin, the human race had contracted an enormous debt to the Divine Justice, a debt of which it was perfectly unable to discharge even the smallest portion. Hence, Man, like a fallen monarch, in losing his crown of innocence, lost his liberty also, and being dispossessed of all his rights to his heavenly inheritance, became the slave of Satan, and had no prospect to look forward to in the future, but the horrible prospective of a never-ending captivity.

But, touched with the misery of our unhappy race, the Eternal Word interposed to save us; He offered Himself to His Father as a propitiation for our sins. His Father, in His infinite charity, accepted the offer of His Son. He so loved the world that He gave us His only beloved Son, the eternal object of His complacency and affection; He permitted Him to assume our nature, and to make satisfaction by His humiliations and sufferings, for the debt which we owed to His Divine Justice.

It is, then, because Jesus owed all that sinners owed to the justice of His Father; it is because He took upon Him all their crimes, that this inflexible justice poured out upon Him the vials of its wrath. Our debts have been laid upon the Holy of Holies; the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and He must pay the uttermost farthing. He must raise us up by His abasement, purchase our liberty by the sacrifice of His own, become enslaved in order to set us free, heal our



wounds by the stripes that He receives, and suffer death to give us life, and preserve us from everlasting condemnation.

Yes, our Jesus is a prisoner for our offences, and for our debts also. He has taken upon Himself to answer for the whole world ; and it is not alone with love, but with the deepest *humility*, that He takes our place, that He accepts the penalty due to our sins, and covers Himself with that confusion which we were bound to feel, in presence of the infinite purity and Majesty of an offended God. O if our eyes overflow with tears, as we read of the heroic charity and self-denying devotion of certain great saints, if we feel our hearts moved with admiration at the thought of St. Paulinus selling himself to redeem a captive slave ; if the story of St. Vincent de Paul taking the place of a galley slave, and labouring at the oars like a common criminal, fills us with astonishment and admiration, how should we be filled with love, with deep and fervent adoration and gratitude, when we think, not of a saint alone, but of the Holy of Holies, the Son of God Himself, becoming a prisoner and a captive for our sakes, sacrificing His own liberty, not to liberate a stranger, but to set *us* free from the shameful captivity of the devil, to bring *us* forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God !

## II.

How should our hearts be filled to overflowing with sorrow, gratitude, and love, when we behold our Jesus delivered into the hands of the armed men whom Judas brought to the garden of Gethsemani, bound, placed in the midst of them, like a criminal, struck and insulted by the servants, as well as by the rough and cruel soldiers, and finally led by them from the Garden of Gethsemani to the gates of Jerusalem. Jesus is weak, exhausted, trembling from the effects of that cruel agony which He had so lately undergone, and they have no pity for Him, no compassion for the state of utter weakness to which He is reduced; they push Him, they strike Him with their staves and swords to make Him walk faster, they drag Him, rather than lead Him into the palace of the High Priest.

But in that palace, under the very eyes of the High Priest, we may at least hope that the laws of justice and humanity will be regarded? Alas, it is not justice, but hatred that now sits in most iniquitous judgment upon the spotless Lamb of God! In His case, men regard no laws, neither human or divine: He is not a culprit, but a victim devoted and given over to their barbarous fury. And whilst the ordinary class of malefactors and accused persons are under the protection of their judges, and are not suffered to be tormented by heavy penalties, save those which the law inflicts, Jesus finds His judges to be His bitterest enemies, resolved upon His condemnation and

death, who, instead of His protectors become His most eager executioners, permit Him to be insulted freely in their presence, and allow His Adorable Person to become the sport and laughing-stock of His malicious accusers, who treat that innocent victim, against Whom no evil thing could possibly be alleged or proved, as no one, not even the vilest criminal, was ever suffered to be treated before.

Behold Him then, this Divine Captive, a prisoner in the hands of a troop of vile and miserable wretches, who spit in His face, and blindfold Him ; striking Him with the palms of their hands, and saying derisively, "Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that striketh Thee?" And He endures it all with heavenly patience ; His face is swelled, disfigured by the cruel blows it has received ; His hair and His beard are almost pulled up by the roots ; His hands, so tightly bound by the cords which secure them, are also swelled and pitifully bruised : but all this cruelty has no effect upon Him, save to increase, if that were possible, His unalterable calmness and sweetness. Jesus accepts His sufferings as the penalty due to sin, He utters no complaint, He lifts up His heart to His Father, He is passive under the hand of Divine Justice, which chastises Him as the representative of bankrupt humanity.

And now the night wears on, the inventive cruelty of His enemies is exhausted sooner than His patience ; they are weary with abusing Him, and they push Him into a sort of subterranean dungeon under the palace of the High Priest, and leave Him there to await the dawn of day. Sister

Catherine Emmerich, in her Revelations of the Passion, describes the appearance of the Divine Prisoner in this gloomy cell; He is leaning against the pillar to which He is bound, His eyes are raised to a narrow loop-hole in the thick wall through which the first rays of the morning sun are faintly appearing, and He seems to hail with a transport of infinite love the dawning of that day of which He will not see the close, but on which He will complete the glorious work of our redemption. Where is the heart so hard and cold, that it can contemplate without transports of sorrow, gratitude and love, our Jesus, our Divine Saviour alone in that dark cell, His heavenly countenance pale, disfigured by the cruel treatment He has received, and by the sufferings of His Agony in the Garden; parched with thirst, burning with fever, and yet forgetting all His sufferings past, and reaching forth to those that are to come, thinking only of us, and devoting the last hour of His mortal life, the last affection of His Adorable Heart, to the love of us poor sinners, and to ardent longing for our salvation.

And doubtless during those hours of solitude and captivity which closed the night preceding that great day on which our redemption was accomplished, the Sacred Heart of our Jesus must have dwelt upon the great gift which He had bestowed upon His Church; He must have thought upon His Holy Eucharist, that other prison of love, that tabernacle where His captivity was not to last a few hours only, but to be prolonged throughout the course of ages, even until the consummation of the world: His Heart, so loving and so

tender, must have rested in that sweet yet bitter thought; no doubt He was sorrowful in foreseeing the indifference and ingratitude of many souls who would still neglect and outrage Him, even in the Sacrament and Masterpiece of His love: but another vision than this must also surely have consoled His Sacred Heart, and the happy souls who would answer to His call of love, and would find Him in the Holy Eucharist as their unfailing treasure and endless joy, must have gladdened His solitude in those early morning hours, and consoled the heavenly Captive with a vision of gratitude and love; for surely the heart of our Jesus must have needed a little love to recompense Him for so much hatred; His wonderful charity must have sought some return, though faint and feeble in comparison with His own, and His sad and earnest glance must have anxiously pierced the mists which hung over the ages yet to come, to seek for the souls who were one day to love Him, yet not so much to console His own afflictions as to reward their fidelity, and to love them with such intensity as the Heart of Jesus alone can love.

### III.—*The Prisoner of Love.*

Eighteen centuries have rolled their course since the Day of our Redemption, and Christ triumphant and glorious, conqueror over death, and hell, and sin, has taken the sceptre of His Almighty Power in His nail-pierced hands, and exalted our humanity in His Person to the Throne of the Triune Godhead. But whilst He sits at the right hand of

His Father, surrounded with all the splendours of His Divinity, whilst the holy Humanity of our Lord, now impassible and glorified, receives the adoring homage of the angels and elect souls, who crowd with love and praise around His eternal throne: still the God of love, faithful to His promise, no less abides with us poor exiles here below, and continues ever more on earth, our Brother, our Father, and our Friend.

And even more than this He does for us, for love has converted the God of Heaven into the Prisoner of man, and that loving captivity which our Jesus first inaugurated in the upper chamber, is to be coeval with the duration of the world. O! marvel of infinite charity and love, O, wonder, such as the Heart of Jesus alone could have imagined or conceived! Which of us could have ventured to *ask* our Lord to do all that He has done for us? Who could have dared to ask Him to hide Himself, to annihilate Himself, to veil His glory under the appearance of a little bread, and to pass, not one day only, but long centuries, enclosed not only in a temple, but in the narrow space of a tabernacle and a Ciborium: and that, in perfect immobility, without using His senses, with no appearance of life, with no difference to distinguish His Real Presence from the ordinary appearance of bread. But what we could never have dared to ask, what we could never even have imagined, the love of Jesus has done for us. He has done it with joy, with pleasure, for His love is far different from the narrow, self-interested, parsimonious thing which we call love, it is full, unbounded, generous and free. He loves in God,

and all His works of charity are infinite and perfect. It did not content the Heart of Jesus to have descended from heaven, on purpose to find that poor creature of clay whom it pleased Him to love so tenderly ; it was not enough that He had taken his nature upon Him, given His life to save him, humbled Himself in order to exalt him ; but He further condescends to put Himself in the power of this frail earthly creature, and to become not only his Guest, but his Prisoner. Oh, let us fall down and adore this excess of love wherewith God hath loved us, but let us not endeavour to comprehend it, for it is incomprehensible, like our God Himself, and it would be madness to attempt to measure His infinite love by our limited intelligences.

Yes, Jesus is our Prisoner, and each of our churches is a prison ; there He will dwell a Captive as long as the will of His human creatures retains Him. Whether the temple which contains Him be one of colossal proportions, a marvel of art and magnificence, or whether it be small, poor and humble as the stable of Bethlehem, still it is the temple of the Lord of Hosts, and when I enter its sacred precincts, I may say in my heart, Here dwells the Prisoner of Love. Jesus is there. But this temple, small and narrow as it is in comparison with Him, whose majesty filleth the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea, is yet too large for the state of abjection to which our Divine Captive is reduced by His love to sinful man, and to find Him in His abode I must approach the altar, for the God of Calvary can dwell nowhere but in the place of sacrifice. On the Altar there is a

tabernacle, in the tabernacle, a little golden vase, and this little golden vase is the cell which contains the Prisoner of Love. The priest has spoken, and obedient to his voice, the Master of Heaven descends upon the Altar. The priest bends his knee, he bends his forehead to the ground before the Divine Captive, and his trembling hands enclose the splendour of the Father, the glory of the Creator, the eternal joy of the angelic choirs and saintly inhabitants of heaven, in that little golden Ciborium.

Jesus is enchained by bands of love in this His narrow prison, the sacred species will be consumed, the God of the Holy Eucharist will issue from His tabernacle to bestow Himself upon His faithful worshippers, to descend into living tabernacles, to enter fleshly Ciboriums, which are not, alas, so pure as that from which He descends to accomplish the work of His infinite charity, but the holy species will be renewed, the tabernacle will not be suffered to remain empty. The voice of the priest who yester morning duly summoned the God of heaven to descend anew upon His Altar, may this day be hushed in death : but to-morrow another priest shall ascend the altar steps in his room, and invested with the same immortal priestly power, shall again command the presence of his Lord : and the same Divine Captive, before whom our fathers' knees were bent in humblest adoration, who was visited by them, who received in His temple the homage of their adoration and prayer, who consoled their sorrows, even as He consoles our griefs in the present day, will still await in His mysterious prison the generations of



our children yet to come, and will pour upon them the riches of His benediction and grace, as He poured them upon our fathers in ages past, and as He blesses us at this very day. Man passeth away and continueth not; as the flower of the field he fadeth and is no more, but Jesus lives, He dwells amongst us through the ages that roll by, to mark each succeeding generation with the seal of immortality; to deposit the germ of a glorious resurrection in every one of those poor houses of clay, which death destroys in sad succession, and reduces to dust and ashes; to give to every faithful soul, with the gift of Himself, the pledge of a future life of glorious immortality and happiness ineffable. Empires are destroyed, dynasties pass away; earthly thrones are overturned, powers and dignities pass from hand to hand: but the Altar remains and stands erect amidst the prostrate ruins of mortality; the Tabernacle still contains its Prisoner of Love, because the world always needs His Mediation, and His Precious Blood; to escape the terrors of Divine Justice, and to bring down the benediction and mercy of the Eternal God, upon a guilty and wretched world.

#### IV.

But what does Jesus do in this captivity of love? What does He do? He adores, He prays, He still effects the salvation of the world, He offers Himself to His Father as a Victim ever offered and ever living: from the north to the south, from the east to the west, by night and by

day, His Blood is ever flowing on the altars of the Catholic world, and the wrath of God which was excited by our crimes, is quenched in the stream of that adorable Blood.

What does He do? He pays the debts of all the sinners in the world, and of each sinner in particular: He pays yours, He pays mine, He pays for each one of us, because He has made Himself surety for all of us, and for each one of us in particular. We are all debtors to the justice of God, but so great is our poverty, that, far from being able to pay our debt to His infinite Justice, we increase it by fresh offences every day we live. If He left us to work in our own strength, all our satisfactions would be valueless, and it is only in union with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, that they become meritorious to us, and pleasing in the sight of God.

Let us then never again ask what Jesus does in His prison of love. We know now what He does, He discharges our debts, and it is for that very purpose that He veils His glory, encloses Himself in this narrow space, condemns Himself to perpetual silence, to absolute quiescence: it is therefore that He yields implicit obedience to the will of His ministers, that He will remain in subjection to them, until the consummation of ages, descending from heaven as often as they proceed to call Him down upon the altar, suffering Himself to be carried by them wheresoever they please, whether it be to the rich man's sumptuous abode, or to the humble dwelling of the poor, remaining peacefully enclosed in the tabernacle which is exposed upon our altars, offering no resistance

whatever to their will, making Himself in all things like unto a captive, who is deprived of the liberty of his actions, and is in a state of absolute dependance upon those who hold his life and liberty in their hands.

Jesus is a prisoner in the hands of man, a willing prisoner, a prisoner of love. This is the prodigy of love which amazes and confounds my reason; but there is one prodigy more amazing and incomprehensible still, it is the prodigy of the insensibility of men, of the indifference and ingratitude of those on whose behalf this miracle of love is performed. What should we think of a man, who had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment for a crime which he had committed, and who received his liberty from the generous self-devotion of his father, or his brother, who, touched with compassion for his unhappy fate, and urged by tenderest love, had voluntarily become a prisoner in his stead, and joyfully assumed the fetters which were prepared for him? What should we say, I repeat, if that man, being permitted to pay a daily visit to that father or brother, who had voluntarily preserved his liberty at the expense of his own, should yet desert him in his captivity, and becoming completely immersed in his own pleasures and affairs, pass daily by the prison where his brother wears away his life, without ever casting a thought upon him, or remembering that he only demands, in return for so much affection, a little gratitude and love? Ah, we should surely say, that this man was a disgrace to humanity, and deserving of the deep contempt of every noble heart!

It is easy to make the application to ourselves. Alas, how often has this Divine Prisoner, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, who sacrificed His liberty to restore ours, and His life for our salvation; how often has He also been left alone, and without a single worshipper, in the solitude of His tabernacle! Is it a rare thing to behold an utter solitude around the tabernacle, and none left to wait upon the Divine Captive, save some few faithful souls, who, like the lamp of the sanctuary, consume away in sorrow, because they behold the altars of the Lord of Hosts left desolate, and the Dweller in the tabernacle deprived of His just tribute of gratitude and love? Or is it rare to see the crowd throng past the temple, where Jesus in His Eucharistic prison patiently awaits their coming, while they have not a thought or look of love to spare for Him, while they forget that He is there, and whilst no single sentiment of gratitude is aroused in a single soul, by the sight of the temple, which encloses His earthly prison of love? They have time for everything else, for their pleasures, for their business, but they have no time for Jesus. Ingratitude towards Him is quite the order of the day; but does ingratitude then lose its odious nature when only He is the object of it? And is it allowable to be ungrateful to Him alone?

But as for us, who glory in the name of friends of Jesus, worshippers of the Hidden God; let us form around Him a guard of honour, let us come to His feet with hearts all on fire with gratitude, and let us, by our devoted affection and constant homage, endeavour to recompense Him for the

ingratitude and indifference which afflict so deeply His Adorable Heart. Let us not suffer a single day to pass without visiting Jesus in the sacrament of His love, without bringing to the Divine Prisoner the alms of a little affection; He will give us in exchange the alms of His grace. Jesus has numbered amongst the works of mercy, upon which He will one day bestow a rich reward, the work of visiting those who are in prison. If then, He graciously condescends to accept and regard as done to Himself, that which we do for those miserable outcasts of society, who are justly deprived of the liberty which they abused by the commission of heinous crimes; if in His great charity He desires us to forget their guilt, and to remember in them only our true bond of common brotherhood; nay more than this, if He even puts Himself in their place to excite our still more lively compassion, that so we may be more eager to dry their tears, to visit and console them: with what tender affection will He not regard the visits which we pay to Himself, a Prisoner of love for our sakes upon our altars, and with what *gratitude*, if I may be permitted the expression, will not His Divine Heart be penetrated, in beholding our eagerness, our zealous desire to become partakers of His solitude, and to make up by our assiduity for the remissness of those who desert Him.

Yes, we may be quite certain that Jesus will not forget one of these visits which we pay to Him, He will inscribe every hour that we pass at the foot of His Altar, in His Heart: each one of those words of love which have been poured out at His feet, each one of those holy desires and

aspirations which we have uttered, will be rewarded with countless benedictions even here on earth, He will welcome us day by day, as a friend welcomes his friend, with eager affection and joy; He will shed tears of heavenly sweetness over these hours of silence and absorbed devotion which we pass before the tabernacle, heart to heart with our Blessed Lord; He will speak peace to our souls, He will reveal to them the hidden secrets of His tenderness, the mysteries of His grace, He will inebriate them with the joys of His love. And then, when sickness comes to lay us also on a bed of pain and suffering; when our last hour is at hand, then will Jesus come from His prison of love: He will come to visit us *Himself*. He will come to dry our last tears, to console and strengthen us in our grief, to place His Sacred Heart on ours, to sanctify its last faint throb, and receive our latest sigh.

And at length on that great and awful day, when the God of the Holy Eucharist becomes the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead, He will place upon our brows the glorious crown of immortality, and He will say to us, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, for I was a prisoner and you visited Me, you consoled Me in My captivity; you have worshipped Me day by day before My altar, you have adored Me daily in My prison of love; now shall you surround the throne of My glory, and render to Me, in My eternal kingdom, the never-ending homage of your gratitude and love." Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE THIRD  
DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I adore Thee, Divine Captive, enchained to our altars by love. I kiss, O Lord, those sacred bonds which continue to us Thy presence, which retain Thee ever amongst us, and enable us poor exiles on earth to enjoy the presence of the God whom they hope to possess for ever in heaven. O may these bonds of love bind me ever fast to Thee, O my Jesus, may they enchain my heart to Thy altar, and rivet it firmly to Thy tabernacle: I desire to bear them, to bear them always, these sweet chains of love; they are most dear to me; they are glorious; and henceforth my chiefest glory and joy will be, to be a captive to the God who is by His love a captive to me.

How can I find words to express to Thee my ardent gratitude, O most sweet God of the Holy Eucharist; to Thee, who didst take the burden of my sins upon Thyself, that Thou mightest deliver me from eternal captivity: Thou who didst become surety for me, and didst discharge my whole debt, by the sacrifice of Thy liberty and Thy life? *Poor,* utterly destitute, and miserable as I am, what could I offer to Thy Father, O my Jesus, for the discharge of my enormous debt? Alas! I am completely bankrupt; I could offer no satisfaction whatever to His justice, nothing that could turn away His just anger from my guilty head; I had nothing to expect but the chastisement which I

richly deserved, the punishment of eternal reprobation; but Thou didst take pity upon my wretchedness, O my Saviour! Thou wert touched with the feeling of my infirmities, Thy Sacred Heart opened to cover me with Thy mercy, Thou didst take all my sins upon Thyself, saying to the eternal justice of Thy Father, "Spare the sinner, and strike Thy Son." And then, as if Thou hadst been the guilty one, O my Jesus, His hand was heavy upon Thy innocent head; Thy tears, Thy blood flowed forth, Thy life was sacrificed, and I, the only guilty one, went free.

This Thou didst for me, before I had a heart to love Thee, or a voice to bless Thee, and give Thee thanks for such wondrous generosity and love.

And now, O Lord, if Thou dost still remain a Captive upon this altar, is it not that Thou mayest continue to be my shelter and defence, a safeguard, a Mediator between heaven and me?

I sin, and straightway Thy arm arrests the vengeance of Thy Father: my ingratitude offends Him, and thankless as I am, Thou openest to me Thy Sacred Heart, Thou invitest me to take shelter in Thy wounds: daily I contract fresh debts to the justice of Thy Father, and daily does Thy Blood descending on the altar, discharge the fearful debt and obtain my forgiveness from my God. This then, O my Jesus, is what Thou dost for me, what Thou dost for us all; how can we praise Thee for such wondrous mercy; how can the longest life suffice to pay Thee a fitting tribute of gratitude and love?

Oh, if men were truly grateful, their lives would seem too short to thank Thee for all Thy mercy;



they would come in crowds to surround Thy altars, they would throng with eager speed to offer Thee the homage of their adoring love; love would enchain them to Thy feet, O my Saviour, the hours they pass with Thee, would be the happiest hours of their lives: duty alone would induce them to quit Thy sacred presence, and even when obliged to leave Thee, they would do so with the ardent desire and hope of a speedy return. But, alas! O my God, Thy temples are deserted, Thy altars are abandoned: none but angels crowd Thy sacred courts and kneel beside Thy tabernacle; the forgetful crowd paces thoughtlessly by the door of that temple where Thou remainest desolate, abandoned by all. They fritter away their time, they spend it in useless visits, in frivolous conversations, in dangerous or guilty pleasures, but this time so thoughtlessly wasted, so lavishly bestowed upon the gratification of their interests and passions, they grudge a moment of it to Thee, my Jesus; they have time for the world, for its vanities and pleasures, but they have none to spare for Thee, for the God who gives us time, and awaits us in eternity.

Ah! if the perishable riches of earth were dispensed by Thee from the tabernacle, if glory and human greatness were to be obtained of Thee, my Jesus, then would crowds of supplicants throng Thy temples, O my God; then would all hands be extended to Thee; then would every knee bow before Thy throne; then would every man find time to come and implore Thy favours, such favours as the natural heart of man so madly desires; but because Thou grantest them only the

riches of Thy grace, because Thou dost enrich but their souls, and offerest them only the glories of eternity, the world disdains Thy promises, refuses Thy favours, rejects the only true Good, and is so completely occupied with its cupidity and passions that it abandons Thee, and seeks the gratification of its sensual desires, far from Thy Sacred Presence.

Thy Heart is pained by this desertion, O my Jesus; it languishes, consumed with love for the ungrateful, who forget Thee; it calls them, and in the solitude of the tabernacle it never ceases to entreat that they may obtain grace to be converted and repent. Yes, my Jesus, Thy charity is stronger than their ingratitude; Thy Heart still retains for them the love of a father and a friend. Thou dost bless and love them still, and from Thy prison of love Thou dost offer Thy long captivity to Thy heavenly Father, that captivity to which Thou hast condemned Thyself for their sakes, that Thou mightest obtain for them time to do penance, and to return to Thee.

But that Adorable Heart, which pleads the cause of sinners, seems to speak to us also from His hidden dwelling-place; He seems to say to us, as formerly the Divine Master said to His Apostles: "And will ye also go away?" No, my Jesus, never will we desert Thee, our hearts are ever Thine, bound fast by the cords of love to Thy Heart, to Thy Holy Eucharist. And where should we go, O my Lord, to find such blessings as we find in Thee? Art Thou not the Truth to enlighten us, the Way in which we walk with full assurance of safety, the Life by which we live?

Art Thou not also the strength which sustains our weakness, the Treasure which supplies our needs, and the joy which lightens all our grief? Ah! we will stay with Thee, we will dwell with Thee in time, we will remain with Thee throughout eternity. Let the world vaunt her boasted pleasures, let her sing of her joys, and glory in her riches; we envy none of her fancied happiness, our own is sufficient for us. We will glory only in the chains of love, which we bear for Thee, and which bind us to Thee in Thy holy Eucharist; we have but one treasure, and that treasure is Thyself; and we desire nought but the possession of Thee.

O Mary, Immaculate Virgin, whose virginal bosom was the first and holiest tabernacle of the God whom we adore in the most holy Eucharist, thou who alone of all created beings hast fully comprehended the gift which thy Divine Son bestowed upon mankind by coming to dwell with us until the consummation of the world; lend us, I pray, thy heart to love Jesus in His Holy Eucharist, teach us the secret of that divine intercourse which delights His Heart; obtain for us that grace, that knowledge, which discovered to the saints His infinite grandeur, His sublime sweetness; which inflamed their hearts with His love, and caused them to find those hours so speedy in their flight which they passed at His Sacred Feet.

And then, O tender Mother, have compassion on the poverty of thy children, and when Jesus deigns to visit us in Holy Communion, do thou undertake the task of ornamenting and beautifying the poor tabernacle of our hearts, by

obtaining for us an ample participation in thy spirit of faith, humility, purity, and charity, that so they may become to Him a true prison of love, wherein He may dwell for evermore. Amen.

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## FOURTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

### THE SAVIOUR KING.

“ Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek and full of sweetness.”

#### I.—*The Crown of Thorns.*

Come, daughters of Sion, come faithful souls, issue from your dwellings, and hasten to behold the new Solomon, with the crown wherewith His Mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, in the day of His rejoicing. Come virgins, chosen spouses of the Lamb, contemplate the Lily amongst thorns, whose beauty has captivated your hearts, come quickly, hasten to enjoy the sweet odours which exhale from His wounds, fear not the thorns which surround Him, but let your chief glory and happiness be in partaking of His crown; for if it is to-day a crown of agony and shame, to-morrow it will become a crown of glory, a diadem of everlasting beauty.

The Son of David has arrived at the glorious day of His accession to the throne, the day of His coronation and royal anointing. As Son of God, the empire of heaven and earth belongs to

Jesus ; as son of Mary He has a right to reign over Israel, and to sit upon the throne of the Kings of Judah, whose royal blood flows in His veins. His rights to this double royalty are incontestable, and even in His earliest days He beheld kings coming from the East to acknowledge His sovereign power, and to lay at the foot of His humble cradle the tribute due to His royal majesty. And now also have the inhabitants of Jerusalem received Him with gladness, saluted Him as the Son of David, as the legitimate successor to his throne, and as the only king possessed of any right to reign over them. Jesus will now ascend His throne, from which He will extend His royal sceptre, and rule over all the nations of the earth ; He is now to receive that glorious crown before which the diadems of every earthly king must one day be brought low. But this royal investiture of our Saviour King, His anointing, His coronation, will be celebrated with pomp and ceremonies ordained not by human wisdom but by the wisdom of God, in conformity with the laws of His empire over our souls, and with those which He has already given to earth ; laws which oblige His subjects to trample human pride and glory underfoot, to overcome sensuality and avarice by the practice of the opposite virtues, humility, poverty, and the crucifixion of the flesh, with all its affections and desires.

It is by love alone that Jesus desires to reign : it is a sceptre of mercy that He extends to the universe, and it is by His own example that He teaches us to combat the vices which He has con-

demned : He leads us on Himself in the strife to attain the contrary virtues, by preceding us in the path of humiliation and suffering, and it is by descending Himself into the lowest depths of the valley of humiliation, that He teaches us to ascend to the highest summits of sanctity, and instructs us how to take heaven by force, and how to win an eternal crown that fadeth not away, a throne, everlasting in the heavens.

Therefore the splendours and gorgeous pomp of His royal investiture will be those of suffering, ignominy, and humiliation : the throne on which He sits will be the Cross ; the Crown that he receives will be a Crown of thorns, and the sceptre which He bears in His Divine Hands will be a fragile reed.

But that circlet of shame which Jesus wears in the day of His sorrows, will be quickly replaced by a crown of glory, and many hearts will be wounded by the thorns of His crown, and will come with gratitude and songs of praise to kiss the loving sceptre of the Saviour King. Many wise virgins, charmed with the beauty of their celestial Spouse, will dispute the honour of sharing with Him His royal crown, and, laying at His Feet the lily of their virginity, will prefer the glorious title of Spouses of Christ, to that of the brides of any earthly king ; far happier in being permitted to repose under the shadow of His Cross, than in sitting on the throne in company with the monarchs of this world. And many royal heads will bend low before this adorable Head, now crowned with thorns, and bowed down upon the Cross to bless both small and great, poor and rich, the

humblest slave as well as the mightiest kings of earth.

The *wisdom* of God is marvellously seen, in the means which He employs to place His Divine Son in possession of the empire of the universe : but the *mercy* of the Saviour King is displayed as wonderfully in the love with which He accepts the crown of sorrows, wherewith His mother, the ungrateful synagogue, crowned Him in that day, when He entered into an indissoluble union with the Church, His virginal Spouse, and conferred upon her, life through His wounds, and immortality through His Blood.

## II.

The crown of innocence with which God adorned the brow of man in the day of his creation, had been suffered to fall from his head ; degraded by sin, he lost the power which he once possessed over himself, as well as all his rights to an eternal inheritance.

But now that the new Adam is come to raise the sinner man, from his lost and fallen state, He places on His pure brow, unstained by sin, and bright with purity and innocence, a crown of those thorns whose growth was caused by sin ; He sounds the profundity of that abyss to which the sinners fell, whom He is come to save, and He descends to the very lowest depths of humiliation and ignominy that He may bring them up with Him from that awful gulf, and that He may restore to the fallen majesty of man, the rights which he

once possessed to an eternal kingdom. He assumes the insignia of His dignity of Saviour King, and exalts His fallen creature to share His glories and partake His heavenly throne.

And now the Son of David, the true heir of the kings of Juda, nay more, the only Son of God, King of eternal ages, is rejected, betrayed, denied by His own people, and left to undergo in the prætorium that shameful scourging usually inflicted only upon slaves. His ungrateful people have delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles, and the Roman soldiers proceed to decree the honours due to royalty to that meek Victim who has been called in their hearing the King of the Jews : but what a royalty is this ! What do I behold, O my God ? Angels, veil your faces and weep in silent grief, for a ruined broken pillar is now the throne of Him who dwelt in glory and brightness unspeakable, in those depths of glorious light where even your eyes, accustomed to the celestial splendours, are dazzled as they gaze : the royal robe which enfolds the bleeding, lacerated Form of the Son of the Most High God, is an old tattered purple garment, which the princes of the earth have worn and cast contemptuously aside, and His Crown is formed of prickly branches of the long sharp thorn, which they drive with cruel blows into that adorable Head, around which the rays of divine glory continually play : while placing a reed as a sceptre in His kingly hands, they bow the knee in mockery before Him, they spit in His face, and revile Him, saying, “ Hail, King of the Jews.”

The blood flows fast over His sacred brow, it



flows in torrents over that fair countenance which the cruel scourge had spared. The fairest amongst ten thousand is disfigured, His countenance cannot be recognised by those who know Him best: but no, I am deceived, He is lovelier than ever, fairer than all the children of men; for love has transfigured Him, it has adorned Him with fresh charms, and the ensigns of His Kingdom of Sorrows confer upon Him far greater power to win the hearts of men, than all the glories of His Divinity could bestow. Oh! how lovely is our Jesus! Those thorns which pierce His Head so cruelly are to Him a crown of rejoicing; how lovely He appears in that robe of purple which His Blood has tinged with a still deeper dye: how sublime is His dignity, as He sits upon this ignominious throne! How powerful is the sceptre which seems to be so weak, and how ardently are we drawn to fall with mingled love and sorrow at His sacred Feet, to offer Him our most devoted adoration and burning love and gratitude, as some little reparation for the sufferings He has endured out of love to us.

Who then can fail to love Thee, O most sweet and lovely Saviour, who can refuse to bless and praise the rich and exhaustless treasures of Thy grace? Who can henceforth refuse to submit to the gentle sway of the Prince of Peace, remembering all that He has done for us! He has taken upon Himself that terrible malediction which was pronounced upon the first man by the Creator in His wrath: "Cursed shall the earth be for thy sake, henceforth it shall bring forth unto thee, briars and thorns." And what has the

earth indeed given to our Jesus? Nought, save the briars and thorns of every imaginable kind of bitter grief: that cruel crown was borne in His Heart long years before they placed it on His sacred brow, and all the sufferings endured by the whole line of guilty humanity pierced that adorable Heart with their cruel darts, and wounded it to the very quick. But if the earth was but a vale of tears to Jesus, if He took upon Himself the malediction which was pronounced upon us, it was that He might convey to us that benediction which was promised many long ages before by the prophet, when he said, "The blessing of Him who appeared in the Bush, shall come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the head of the Nazarene, the Firstborn amongst many brethren." (Deut. xxxiii.) It has descended upon us also, that benediction which reposed on the adorable Head of the Nazarene. We have seen Him in the midst of the bush of thorns, taking away the curse, healing us by His wounds and bruises; and the blood which issues from those wounds, flowing upon the barren soil of our souls—that sterile soil which has hitherto produced nothing but the briars and thorns of sin—restores its fertility, and causes it to blossom and bring forth abundantly the fair flowers of purity and holiness, and the rich fruits of the most heroic and saintly virtues.

The human heart is weak, inconstant, and continually inclined to evil; it bends like the frail reed, to the impure breath of vile and earthly passion, but Jesus takes it in His hand with the reed presented to Him by His ungrateful people, as a derisive token of His eternal royalty. He

extends the sceptre of His mercy over that poor human heart. He strengthens it by His grace, and the Lives of the Saints teach us how sublime our poor human nature can become under His powerful aid, how strong becomes its weakness when resting upon His redeeming arm.

But man was not only weak, he was also poor and indigent, utterly destitute of all good; and the great enemy of mankind, exulting in his abject condition, insulted and mocked him as if his state was one of helpless, hopeless degradation. And now our Saviour King assumes that purple robe wherewith His enemies invested Him in mockery of regal state, and covers our poor nature, which Satan had stripped and spoiled, with the royal purple of His adorable blood; and thus clothed with the merits of our Saviour and Redeemer, man can lift his fallen head, and, looking up to heaven, exclaim with thankful joy, Behold my heritage! Let us then ascribe for evermore, glory, honour, adoration and love to this King of heavenly sweetness, and blessed for ever be this sign and token of His kingdom, a kingdom of sorrows to Himself, but of joy, eternal joy, to all His faithful followers and servants.

### III.—*The Crown of Honour.*

The Church, that immortal virgin, who was cradled in the pierced side of the Redeemer, and received life and fecundity from the last sighs of her Divine Spouse; this heavenly queen, and spouse of Jesus, has ever gloried in surrounding

the most Holy Eucharist with her constant love and burning adoration. For this heavenly treasure was the last legacy of her Lord, the treasure which He bequeathed her with His dying breath, to console her solitary widowhood, to give her back Him for whom she continually sighs, and to be, not her consolation only, but also the never-failing fountain of perpetual youth, of continual fertility. The God of the Holy Eucharist, is a hidden God; but the Church well knows that He is also the God of glory, and the more He hides Himself, the more jealous she becomes to render Him due honour, and to ensure Him the loving homage and adoration of His children. The God of the tabernacle is the Spouse who has promised to be with her even until the consummation of ages, the Spouse on whose arm she leans confidently, throughout the course of centuries, and on which she will lean to the end, for His protection has never failed her, His love has never ceased to cover her with His sheltering arm, His hand has never for a single instant abandoned the helm of that frail vessel, upon which she travels over a stormy sea to the haven of eternity. How great, then, is the Church's love for the most Holy Eucharist! As regent of the kingdom of Jesus upon earth, she seeks for nothing but to extend His empire, to spread His rule over all the nations of the universe. And no sooner have her messengers effected a new conquest of some remote island or far distant country for the Lord, than straightway there arises an altar beside the cross, which they have already planted there with labour and with toil; for the altar of sacrifice is also the throne of the God of

love, and the messengers of good tidings are eager to bring new worshippers to His sacred feet.

And not only is the Church most proud of this rich treasure which is entrusted to her keeping; she watches over it also with the eager care and solicitude of a young mother for her first born child. This tender and faithful spouse of Jesus, is jealous to make reparation for the outrages inflicted upon her King and Lord in the day of His Agony and Passion. She places upon her own head the crown of thorns which bound her Saviour's brow; she preserves it as her most precious heritage; she wreathes it round her heart; but she places a crown of honour upon the head of her Heavenly Spouse; she multiplies the varied homage and rites of devotion which she pays to Him in the sacrament of His love; she invents new hymns in His praise; she raises magnificent temples in His honour; she decorates His altars with her most precious gifts; she brings gold, silver, and jewels to that Saviour-King who, when on earth, had no place wherein to lay His head, and when He appears on days of solemnity upon the throne on which He presents Himself to the adoration of the faithful, she surrounds Him with all the pomp and ceremonial of her splendid ritual. She commands that every knee should bow, every head bend low in His presence, that her ministers should offer incense and sweet odours before Him, and that the music of hymns and litanies should resound within the sacred precincts.

But even this is not all; in order to make still fuller reparation for the outrages endured by her

Saviour-King, the Church decrees Him the honour of a solemn triumph, and in the enchanting solemnities of Corpus Christi, and the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament, she renders Him most touching homage, not alone in the temples raised to His honour by the hands of men; but rather she converts the whole vast universe into one great triumphal shrine, where she bears this sweet God of the Holy Eucharist in glory and in joy, where she strews the earth under His feet with flowers, and welcomes Him with sweet music and the loud clash of bells, and the joyous acclamation of His people; while from north to south, from east to west, all the peoples and nations of the earth unite their voices in sweet accord to magnify His Name.

On the day which the Church has appointed, Jesus issues from His tabernacle, but He comes not now like a charitable physician to visit the sick, or to become the Viaticum, the food of the parting wayfarer on his far journey from this world unto eternity. It is now as a Conquering King that He comes to receive the honours of a triumph: or as a monarch making a royal progress throughout his dominions, and receiving just tribute of love and adoration from all his subjects. Borne in solemn procession by His priests and ministers, the God of the Holy Eucharist, hidden though He be under the veil of the Sacred Species, appears not now clad in the vile garment of mockery and scorn, but robed in a garment of honour, placed on a glorious throne which glistens with rich ornaments of gold and precious stones. The innocent hands of children scatter the fairest

flowers upon His path, clouds of incense fill the air with sweet perfumes, and sounds of music and song float softly on the breeze; crowds of priests and ministers of the sanctuary surround Him as an honourable guard, whilst white-robed virgins follow in His train, and commence on earth that song of love and praise which they will hereafter continue throughout the countless ages of eternity, as they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

In the sacred presence of our Eucharistic Lord, is held high festival to-day: the very earth seems to rejoice in the presence of its King; the people leave their homes and hasten to follow in His steps; they fall prostrate to receive His blessing; every heart in which the sacred pulse of faith yet beats, experiences that undefinable feeling which we must all have felt in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, which forces the most reluctant spectators, and far more the willing worshippers, to bow the head and bend the knee, exclaiming: "God is here! God is passing by, let us adore Him!"

It seems as if town and country were vying in eagerness to display their zeal for the God of the most Holy Eucharist; and whilst the inhabitants of the former decorate the thrones which they have prepared for Him with the richest products of their art and industry; the others joyfully adorn them with the wild flowers of the field, and humble blossoms of the woods and meadows. Even our ships dress themselves in their gayest colours, and strive which can give the highest welcome to their God, whose hand has formed the great deep: Who raiseth the stormy wind which

lifteth up the waves thereof; and when they cry unto Him in their trouble, He maketh the storm a calm, and so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be. The hardy peasant bares his head before the most Holy Eucharist, and humbly implores his Lord, who, like himself, knew what it was to labour in the sweat of His brow; to bless his weary toil, to give fertility to his fields, and cause his harvests to bring forth abundantly; and whilst the thundering voice of the cannon announces to all around that the God of armies is about to bestow His benediction upon His people, the soldier presents arms in token of homage, and implores Him to bless his sword, when drawn in the cause of truth and justice.

#### IV.

But the crown of honour which is placed by Holy Church upon the brow of her Heavenly Spouse, is not so much composed of the exterior homage and worship which she pays to Him, in the pomp and ceremonial of her eucharistic rites; as of the virtues of her children, who meekly surround her altars, and to whom she points with noble pride, saying to the world without, "Behold the fruits of the most Holy Eucharist, it is from It that they derive their saintly virtues, their heroic courage, their devoted piety. These are the odorous flowers, the precious pearls and diamonds which He bestows upon me to wreathe my bridal crown, and which I bring with the loving heart of a spouse, and a mother's thankful joy, to lay before the tabernacle of my hidden Lord and King."



And are they not, indeed, the crown of the God of the most Holy Eucharist, those holy priests, those confessors of the faith, who from that sacred source derive their burning zeal, their profound knowledge, and their deep theological acumen; who, with their eyes ever fixed upon the precious deposit of faith, which was confided to their care, surround the altar of their God, prepared to sound an alarm at the first appearance of error, and to sacrifice their lives in defence of the truth? Incorruptible and inaccessible to fear, keeping strict watch around the dwelling-place of the true Solomon, who was wiser than all the kings of the earth, have they ever once faltered or failed when summoned to act in His defence? Never. In vain have tyrants arisen against them; in vain have they tried their endurance with exile, imprisonment, persecution, sufferings, and death; never has their courage failed; never has their firmness been conquered in the struggle; the God of the most Holy Eucharist was on their side, and for Him they fought, for Him they won the victory.

And are not these also a fitting crown for the God of the most Holy Eucharist? these glorious martyrs, who, from Him gained strength to brave torments of the most horrible kind, and death in every fearful shape in which it could possibly be arrayed by the inventive wickedness of men? And when the Church celebrates with joy and praise the wondrous courage of those heroes of the Christian faith, does she not also proclaim that their *constancy in suffering* was the most glorious homage that could be rendered by the hands of men to the divinity of her Heavenly Spouse;

and to His real presence in the most Holy Eucharist? for it was at the altar that they obtained courage to endure these fearful pains, it was in Holy Communion, the Bread of the Strong, that they were strengthened to "climb the steep ascent of pain," and triumph over all the sufferings which the art of man can inflict, and the nations who are deprived of their eucharistic altars, and no longer feed upon that heavenly Bread, are slow to shed their blood for God, and have forgotten how to suffer and die for His sacred name.

And these also are a crown of honour for our God in the most Holy Eucharist, these wise virgins, who derive their purity from Him, as the martyrs derive their strength; they twine around the tabernacle like a bright garland of flowers, which the Church joyfully offers to her Divine Spouse, in sweet exchange for His crown of thorns; their pure hearts burning with love, will make amends to Him for all the hatred which was wreaked upon Him in the day of His Passion; and, like the lamps burning in His sanctuary, with a soft, religious light, they will consume their lives in His service in the silent retreat of the cloister, or in the humble and self-denying works of active charity; finding courage to make the sacrifice of earthly enjoyments, and the fullest compensation for them all, alike in the sacrament of His love.

And these are another crown of honour for the God of the Most Holy Eucharist: these religious of all orders, whom Jesus initiates by this sacrament of love and power, into all those sublime and austere virtues, which are so far above the reach of our unassisted, human strength. For is it not

upon the sacred Heart of our Jesus, Who was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross; that they have learned the practice of self-renunciation and holy obedience? Is it not by means of their continual and almost daily union with Him, who is not only Essential Purity, but the very Fount and Source of all human purity, that they have acquired such innocence of heart, such stainless chastity, that they seem like angels upon earth? And is it not, in fact, the Holy Eucharist which inspires them with such passionate love for holy Poverty, that they renounce all their worldly possessions and turn their backs upon every hope of earthly happiness or pleasure, spending their lives in the service of the poor and needy, out of love to Him Who on earth had not where to lay His Head? Oh, they are most lovely, these flowers of saintly Poverty, which the Church even in our own self-indulgent days, binds up in the crown of honour of her Divine Spouse. These flowers which blossom only in the shade of our altars, and whose sweet perfume brings back to our minds the ancient virtues of our fathers, whose names are almost forgotten amongst us, that so the insatiate children of an age which counts the acquisition of earthly riches as the highest possible happiness and good; which worships no God but gold: may be recalled to the memory of their forefathers' pious charity, and that when they hear the poor of Jesus Christ humbly imploring in His holy name, a morsel of bread to appease their hunger; they may remember that the Heavenly Bread which feeds the soul of that poor man, fills our poor human nature with most exalted virtue;

even with the strength of God Himself, and raises it so far above all mere earthly greatness, that the true poor man is not really the humble mendicant, who *asks*, but the proud rich man who *gives*, and who would do well to bend his haughty head in homage to the meek hand which is stretched out to implore his charity.

And shall not we, too, be jealous of the honour of adding a few flowers to the wreath, which is to form a crown of glory for the God of the Most Holy Eucharist? Shall we not surround Him with our homage, surround Him with our love? Shall we not strive to learn of His Divine Heart, the meekness and humility which He loves; and to practise the graces of self-renunciation, charity, and perfect detachment from all the perishable joys and possessions of earth? All these meek, lowly flowers, the violets of the tabernacle, grow in sweet profusion in the neighbourhood of the altar, and we poor humble children of the Church may gather them as they bloom at His sacred Feet, and bring them as an offering of sweet perfume to our Jesus. Lowly though the offering be, He will not despise it, if, as a saint of the present day has said, we bring our hearts with our flowers, and lay them at His feet. Our heavenly King is full of condescension, and accepts with equal goodwill the offerings of the poor and rich. Let us strive, also, during these days of grace, when our Saviour-King grants us such easy access to His throne, let us strive earnestly to make ample reparation to Him for the outrages which were heaped upon Him in the day of His Passion, and for those which He still receives from the crowds of ungrate-

ful ones, who know but love Him not. Alas! even at this very moment, the world is still wreathing a crown of thorns for our Saviour's Heart; it is still clothing Him with the purple mantle of scorn and ignominy, and insulting Him by its impiety, indifference, and contempt! Let us, at least, add no fresh thorns to that shameful crown, but let our fervour, our eager haste to visit our adorable King, to fall humbly at His feet, to offer Him the homage of our sincere gratitude and ardent love, be some little compensation to His Sacred Heart for all its sufferings, as well as an energetic protestation of our own attachment to His divine Person. Let us range ourselves amongst the most devoted subjects of the King, whose kingdom is not of this world; let us dwell peacefully under His sceptre of love; let the world laugh scornfully if she will, at our credulity and superstition; the day will come when Jesus will acknowledge us to be His faithful subjects, and will call us to inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world for all that love Him; then shall we hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord." Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE FOURTH  
DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, my Saviour and my King, upon the throne of Thy love; humbly prostrate at Thy feet, I offer Thee the tribute of my gratitude and adoration. Glory, love, and thanksgiv-

ing be rendered to Thee for evermore, O King of eternal ages, King of the universe, who comest thus full of sweetness, to dwell amongst the poor children of earth.

The heavens are Thy kingdom, O my Jesus, the splendours of Divinity enshroud the throne of Thy glory; millions of celestial spirits are burning like immortal lamps upon the steps of Thy throne, and the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem eternally resound with their harmonious songs of love. What acceptable adoration can we poor earthly beings offer Thee, O my God, what homage dost Thou seek from our polluted lips? What is the secret charm that causes Thee to delight in the children of men? and what attraction can the poor dwelling place of their exile present to those eyes, which are habituated to behold the magnificence of our eternal home? And then, O Lord, hast Thou forgotten what Thou didst receive from this ungrateful earth in the day of Thy Death and Passion? dost Thou no more remember the robe and crown of the Prætorium? the cross of Golgotha? the cruel ingratitude of Thine own chosen people? Ah, I hear the voice of Thy Heart, O my Jesus, it exclaims, "I came on earth to seek your souls, it is their love for which I thirst; it is their love that I come to implore: I bring you mercy and peace, and it is My love which causes Me to dwell amongst you now, and which will retain Me with you until the consummation of the world."

And yet, O my Saviour, how few of these souls, so tenderly beloved by Thee, make any meet return for such amazing condescension. How many hearts

are still closed to Thine earnest call, and remain insensible to the offers of Thy mercy, deaf to the solicitations of Thy grace! How many souls refuse to have Thee to reign over them, and make themselves slaves to their own passions, and to the prince of this world, who has no part in Thee!

How true is it, O my Saviour-King, that Thy kingdom is not of this world! Thy love retains Thee still amongst us, and yet Thou art still unknown to the greater part of mankind. This earth, which the honour of Thy Presence should long ere this have transformed to a second heaven, is still nought but a land of exile, a strange country to Thee, O my God, and though the Church, Thine ever faithful spouse, lays her homage and adoration at Thy feet, the world still weaves Thee another crown of thorns, and binds it on Thy sacred brow, by her impiety and sacrilegious contempt of Thy eucharistic presence! The irreligious still clothe Thee in the purple robe of scorn, by their unceasing blasphemies against the Most Holy. Incredulity still places in Thy hands the fragile sceptre which they bore in the presence of the mocking multitude in Thy Passion-hour; by its obstinate denial of the truth and reality of Thy Real Presence in the most Holy Eucharist; and hypocrisy offers Thee once again the derisive plaudits of the mercenaries who reviled Thee in that bitter hour; by her deceitful homage rendered at Thine altar; by acts of outward worship, not prompted by the heart; by words of love and adoration, issuing from a soul all stained

with sin, the "Hail, Master;" of treachery and scorn.

Ah, I feel it, O my Jesus. The agonies of Thy Passion are perpetuated throughout the ages of the world, and Thy excess of love has not yet triumphed over the insensibility and ingratitude of the heart of man. The more Thou dost for them, the more ungrateful will they be; the more tenderly Thou lovest them, the more they seem to despise and hate Thee; the more Thou dost abase Thyself for them, the more they exalt themselves against Thee, and strive to heap upon Thee fresh humiliations, in addition to those which Thou didst willingly submit to for their sake. And even, O my Lord, if those who call themselves Thy disciples, were to offer in compensation for so many outrages their ardent love and unfailing truth and fidelity, it might be some consolation to Thy wounded Heart! But, alas! O Lord, we confess with the deepest grief, that when we weep for the ingratitude of sinners, we must also weep for our own; when we sigh for their insensibility and blindness of heart, we must also mourn our own inconstancy and coldness, and acknowledge that we are still more guilty than them, that our ingratitude is greater than theirs, since we have received more love and greater favours than they have done. The coldness and inconstancy of a friend wounds the loving heart far more than the reproaches of an enemy; and those sins of which we think so little, O my Jesus, inflict upon Thee far greater sorrow than the hatred and contempt of those who insult Thee ignorantly; whilst that coldness, those voluntary distractions which so



frequently beset us in Thy presence; that resistance to grace which so often grieves the Holy Spirit; the vain and wandering thoughts, the selfish feelings which we voluntarily cherish, our love of praise, dislike of humiliations, and constant desire for ease, luxury, and pleasure; all these things are so many thorns which we add to Thy crown, and with which we wound and lacerate Thy adorable and loving Heart.

Behold us, then, O Lord, fall prostrate at Thy feet, we humbly offer to make reparation to Thee, not only for the insults and outrages inflicted upon Thee by sinners, but also for those of our own commission; for we also are weak and ungrateful sinners, frailer than the reed, which Thou didst bear in Thy sacred hands. Pardon us, O Lord, pardon us, O Divinest Saviour, who will never reject the humble and contrite heart; receive our offered hearts, pity their weakness, surround them with Thy crown of thorns, and may it pierce them with sorrow and with love; the contrite tears which issue from those salutary wounds will be dearer far to us than all the joys of earth.

Grant us permission, O my Jesus, to draw from the treasures of Thy Church, to offer Thee reparation far superior to any that our own indigence can provide us with, and suffer us to appropriate, in virtue of the communion of saints, the merits of our brethren in the faith, as an offering to Thee. Accept, O my Jesus, in compensation for our lukewarmness, the love of those souls who love Thee best in the sacrament of Thy love; accept, in reparation for our distractions, and our coldness in Thy sacred presence, the long vigils,

the fervent prayers, the burning affections of the choirs of virgins, who consume away their lives in Thy presence, in the solitude and silence of the cloisters; the devoted zeal of the holy religious who wear themselves out in the practices of penance and mortification, and in the works of charity and mercy; who rise in the silence of the night to bless the Divine Sun of the most Holy Eucharist, that Sun whose light shines upon them in the midst of darkness, whose grateful warmth cheers and vivifies their hearts; and grant, that being united to them by faith and charity, we may re-echo their heart-felt cry, blessed, praised, and adored for ever be Jesus, our Saviour and our King, in the sacrament of His love.

O Mary, conceived without sin, thou upon whose pure brow was set the triple crown of Virginity, Divine Maternity, and Martyrdom, thou whose heart, so tender and so pure, was pierced with every wound inflicted by that thorny crown, which wreathed the brow of thy Son and thy God, teach us, O blessed Mary, to twine for Him in His Eucharist, a crown of flowers. Open to us thy heart, which is that *garden enclosed* of the Heavenly Bridegroom, where the flowers bloom for Him alone; suffer us to gather there the fragrant violets of humility, the lilies of chastity, the roses of charity, and aid us, O celestial Virgin, to pluck out all the thorns which occupy the barren soil of our hearts, and to replace them by those heavenly flowers, which we desire by thy hands, to offer as an humble, but acceptable crown, to our Saviour-King. Amen.

## FIFTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

## THE SIN OFFERING.

"It is expedient for you that one man should die for the sins of the people, and that the whole nation perish not."—ST. JOHN, xi. 50.

I.—*Calvary.*

Let us now return in thought to the very commencement of the Christian Era, and let us imagine ourselves to be in the ancient city of David; in that Zion by the Lord beloved, which seemed to repose under the shadow of the temple which He had raised to His honour, as a well-beloved child reposes peacefully under his father's fond protection. But what is this scene that we now behold? The high priests and elders of Israel are mixing with women and little children, in the crowd which throngs the streets; we see great and small, rich and poor, foreigners and strangers of Rome, mingled with the inhabitants of the city, the latest proselyte pressing beside the noble, venerable Jew of the purest race of Abraham; they are all hastening in one direction, with faces of eager curiosity and gratification: some great sight is evidently to be seen. What is it that attracts these eager crowds? Are they hastening to the temple of the Lord of Hosts, to celebrate some high festival? Has Jehovah interfered in some sudden and miraculous manner to protect the persons, or to revive the faith of His chosen people? or is it

some impending danger, some fearful imminent peril of death or destruction, which impels these multitudes to throng His temple, and implore Him to make manifest His great power on their behalf, as He did long ages ago, in Egypt's land of bondage, on the burning desert plain, or in their own fair and favoured land, by the hand of Gideon, Barak, and the prophets? But, no, it is none of these things, not towards that majestic temple does that surging multitude direct its steps, but towards the outskirts of the city; those countenances are not animated by an expression of gratitude, of suppliant entreaty, but rather of malice, and gratified hatred; these loud cries which I hear are not supplications for mercy, but furious outbursts of rage; they are cries of indignation and revolt, uttered in the very precincts of the palace of the Roman governor. A smouldering fire of rage and resentment burns in all those angry glances; these hearts thirst for blood, the blood of the Innocent, their voices loudly demand it.

And what is the cause of this outburst of popular frenzy? Why these furious cries? Why do the streets of Jerusalem re-echo with this tempest of rage? Are the people exasperated by some shameful act of tyranny and injustice? Are they demanding vengeance against an oppressor? And if so, what tremendous crime has called forth this universal cry for blood? Twice already has the representative of Cæsar attempted to calm the people, twice has Pilate been heard to say, "I find no fault, no crime whatever, in this Man whom you have brought before my tribunal. What shall

I do with your King?" And twice had the voice of the Roman governor been drowned by sanguinary, furious, oft repeated cries, swelling like the waves of a mighty sea, till the hoarse roar of, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," has re-echoed a hundred times from the hills of Judea, and filled the Roman officials with terror and dismay.

Once again does the judge appear in the tribune of his palace, but this time he is followed by the accused. Let us cast a look at Him against whom these cries of bloodthirsty vengeance have been uttered by the furious multitude. He stands before His enemies, meek, pale, exhausted, He has only just issued from the hands of the executioners, who have inflicted on Him the ignominious chastisement reserved for slaves; an old tattered robe of imperial purple, cast, not in pity, but in scorn, upon His bleeding shoulders, displays to view His body cruelly lacerated with stripes; His tender flesh is ploughed up and deeply torn by the scourges of the flagellation; His pale brow is encircled with a crown of thorns, and the drops of blood which trickle down His face, and obscure His sight, veil, though they cannot hide, the sweetness and majestic beauty of His countenance. The judge looks severely at the tumultuous crowd; at length he makes a sign to command silence, and, bringing forward the accused, he cries with a loud voice, "Behold the Man!" To this sight, to the announcement of the Roman governor, there is but one answer, it is a cry of death. That fatal cry is uttered by every voice in that tremendous crowd, at the sight of Him, who has been pointed out to them as a Man, but who has hardly any

longer the appearance of one, so thickly is He covered with wounds, and blood, and sores; this piteous sight, I say, far from exciting their commiseration, seems but to stimulate their wrath, and these words, "Crucify Him, crucify Him! Death to Jesus of Nazareth!" are pronounced on all sides with the bitterest fury and rage. Who is, then, this Man? and what has He done, to become the object of this universal wrath and hatred?

## II.

"Who is He?" but Pilate has already told us this, He is the King of the Jews, that Messias King, whose coming was announced to Israel by the prophets, many hundred years before. He is the Son of David, the descendant of the kings of Judah, Prince of Peace, Desire of all nations, Angel of great counsel, Father of the world to come.

He is even more than all this, He is the Son of the Eternal, the Word of the Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He is that powerful Voice, who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, and conveyed to him the law of fear and terror, by the lurid glare of lightning and the fearful rolling of unnumbered thunders. He is the glory and the joy of heaven. What do I say? He is heaven itself. Eternity. Immensity. Jehovah God. Yes, He is God. God humiliated and abased; God made Man for the love of man. He is the Son of Mary, of that Immaculate Virgin who is more pure and holy than the angels; the flesh

which His cruel enemies have so torn and lacerated, was formed in her chaste womb by the operation of the Holy Spirit; the Blood which covers His Sacred Body, and stains the marble floor of the prætorium, is the Blood of God, the price and the ransom of the world. The Face which is now so torn and disfigured, is the face of Him who is fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; this Hand in which is placed a fragile reed, bears none less surely the sceptre of Almighty Power, and the Head which is crowned with thorns, is even now beheld by the angels of heaven, shining gloriously with all the splendour of the God-head.

But how has the Messias King incurred the hatred of His people? What has He done to irritate them to this degree? Has He ruled them with a rod of iron, and enraged them by repeated acts of despotism and tyranny? What has Jesus done? What has He done? Ah! He has only loved: loved to excess this ungrateful people, blessed them, and loaded them with blessings and favours, and they give Him hatred for His love: and to repay Him for all His benedictions and benefits, they curse Him and demand His immediate death. What has He done? He has opened His mouth to enlighten the children of Israel with words of heavenly wisdom and sweetness. He has extended His Hands to bestow unnumbered graces and favours upon His chosen people, but they closed their eyes that they should not see, and their ears that they should not hear, and they hardened their hearts, lest they should be converted and healed; and the rich streams of

grace flowed over them, as the torrent flows over a stone buried deep in its clayey bed, but could never soften, nor awake them to life and love. What has Jesus done ? He has displayed all the resources of His power, and all the rich treasures of His mercy, to gain the hearts of His ungrateful people ; the kingdom which He has established is a kingdom of pure love, and His power has been shown solely in conferring benefits. He has given sight to the blind, He has caused the deaf to hear, consoled the afflicted, relieved the poor, given life to the dead ; and to all the insults and persecutions which He has received He has responded only by His invincible patience, and His adorable meekness. This is what Jesus has done : this is why His people have denied Him, persecuted Him, crowned Him with thorns, and placed in His hands the sceptre of scorn ; this is why they are about to nail Him to that shameful tree, which is a throne of glory, and from which He will reign over the whole universe, until He has placed all His enemies under His feet.

### III.

Wearied with the people's ceaseless clamours, terrified by their threats and furious rage, the unjust judge proceeds to wash his hands of that Sacred Blood which washes away the sins of the whole world ; and he delivers the spotless Lamb, whose innocence he has with his own mouth publicly declared, into the hands of His remorseless enemies. The Lamb of God is given over an



unresisting Victim into the hands of these tigers in human form; these lions ravening for prey: Jesus is led into the midst of them; He is placed in the hands of His executioners; vociferations and cries of triumph resound on every side, at the sight of this adorable Victim; and the ferocious multitude, urged on by Satan to commit the sin of the first murderer, utters maledictions upon Him Who never opened His mouth except to bless them, and Who already intercedes for them, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The Cross was ready for Jesus, or rather, Jesus was ready for the Cross, and His joy in receiving it was greater than the joy of those who laid it upon His shoulders; like the meek Isaac in former times, He now began the steep ascent of Calvary, carrying the wood for the sacrifice, Himself the spotless Victim to be offered thereon, not this time in figure, but in deed and in truth. He passed slowly along the Way of Sorrows, through the midst of the savage, barbarous rabble, who with oaths and curses drove Him out of that city, in which but a few days previously He had been received with acclamations and shouts of joy, as the Son of David, and the Saviour of Israel.

But see, Jesus totters, He falls beneath the weight of the cross: that Cross whose weight is augmented by the heavy load of all the sins and iniquities of mankind; He totters and falls, but His weakness inspires the savage hearts around Him with no pity, no compassion. For all the sorrows which afflict humanity this Man has shed a tear of sympathy, has heaved a sigh of compas-

sion, but not a sigh, not a look of pity is bestowed upon His Agony and Passion by the ungrateful and heartless crowd. He totters and falls; and the people surround Him, they strike Him, they threaten Him, they beat Him worse than any beast of burden which has fallen under a heavy load, and which they endeavour to raise by stripes and ill-usage. But nothing can disturb the heavenly patience and meekness of the Lamb of God; it seems as if every blow, every fresh insult and injury which is heaped upon Him, serves only to cause a more abundant well-spring of love to flow from His Sacred Heart upon His ungrateful creatures, and of all the wounds and scars which cover His adorable Body, there is not one which does not pour forth a flood of grace, mercy, and benediction upon this sinful world. Jesus is more eager to shed His Blood for us out of love, than are His enemies to shed it out of hatred and scorn.

The human mind recoils, and is lost in amazement at this double mystery of love and hatred, kindness and ingratitude, of a mercy which continually rises superior to all that excess of cruelty, and hatred, which is wreaked upon Him in ever-increasing refinements of torture and agony, during the whole course of the mournful drama of His Cross and Passion. We must seek the solution of this mystery, by the help of faith. Faith, if we invoke her aid, will guide us by the light of her ever-burning torch of Truth, into the mysterious depths and heights of the unsearchable Wisdom and Holiness of God, where the Eternal Word reposes in His perpetual abode; and she

will show Him to us in that eternal abode of peace, offering Himself to His Father in reparation for all the offences committed by the sins of man against His Divine Majesty, uniting Himself to human nature for the very purpose of self-abasement and suffering, exchanging the splendours of His Eternal Home for the humility of His earthly existence; the glories of heaven for the lowliness of the Manger of Bethlehem and the carpenter's bench of Nazareth; taking upon Himself the responsibility and the weight of all the sins of the whole world, and casting Himself, as a voluntary Victim, into the yawning gulf of Divine Justice which has suddenly opened before Him, and which would otherwise have engulfed the whole world in its fearful depths.

Yes, Jesus is a Victim, a voluntary Victim; He is actuated by a double impulse in this path of self-sacrifice; He desires both to make reparation to His Heavenly Father for the offence given Him by the sins of mankind, and also to save mankind from the guilt and punishment of their sins, and therefore He rushes with giant strides in the path of agony and sacrifice; therefore it is that He seems to court pain and suffering and ignominy, to receive them even with joy and thankfulness; therefore is His desire for suffering always greater than the sufferings which He is compelled to endure; it is, in fact, inexhaustible, and He will drain the bitter cup to the very dregs.

He considers, on one side, the majesty and greatness of God, and on the other, the nothingness of man; He compares the glory of the offended with the wretchedness of the offender; the inflexi-

bility of the Justice which demands a strict account and satisfaction, with the utter inability of the sinner to offer any equivalent whatsoever for his crime. To the infinite holiness of God, offended by sin, none but an infinite satisfaction will suffice. And the satisfaction can be offered by none but Jesus. As man He can suffer, as God He can bestow an infinite value upon His sufferings, and therefore is it that our Saviour's sacred Heart, that Heart which ever burns with love to His Father and to us, is never irritated by the injustice of His enemies, or by the cruelty of His executioners: He has foreseen it all, He accepts it all, and even when His sacred humanity faints and falls beneath the weight of suffering and grief, His Heart still aspires after fresh agonies, and each trembling step which He makes in ascending the steep hill of Calvary, seems but to augment His desire to immolate Himself for us, to give us His All, even to life itself.

#### IV.

And now the Victim is arrived at the place of sacrifice, the altar is prepared, the Victim voluntarily places Himself upon it, and soon the sound of the hammers which are driving the nails into the hands and feet of our adorable Jesus, the nails which affix the God-Man to the Cross, arouses the echoes of Golgotha; then amidst cries and blasphemies the Cross is raised on high, and displays before earth and heaven the spotless Victim Who has been awaited by Divine Justice for the

space of four thousand years. And who is this Victim, this offering, this sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world? It is the Son of God : the Word of God : the Image of the Father : and yet He does not move to release Himself from the sacrilegious hands of His executioners ; He resigns Himself meekly to their will, and the angels who chanted songs of joy beside His cradle, are weeping silently as they hover above the Cross. That divine voice, which upon the banks of Jordan proclaimed Him the well-beloved Son of the Father, is heard no more, the Father seems to have abandoned His Son, and by thus forsaking Him, who has already been deserted by His dearest friends, fills up the measure of His grief, and puts the seal upon the tortures and agonies of His adorable Heart. And why has the Father thus forsaken His Son ? Why is this additional suffering inflicted upon the tender heart of our Lord ? Faith alone can tell us this, and she answers, " God so loved the world that He gave it His only begotten Son." He gave His Son to be Saviour of the world, to bear the weight of all its crimes, to endure all their chastisement, and when His inexorable justice thus descends upon Him in all its rigour, it is because He desires to pour out upon us the utmost treasures of the riches of His goodness and mercy.

And what does Jesus do ? Ah ! amidst the fearful tortures which He now endures, He is calm, resigned, submissive. He gives Himself up, He abandons Himself, body and soul, to the Hand of Divine Justice, whose weight is pressing Him to the earth. He has loved us, and given

Himself for us, and upon the Cross He loves us still, He suffers, He endures for us. His sufferings have not softened the hard hearts of His enemies, or moved their souls to pity; their rage and hatred still roar around the Cross, like the surging waves of a troubled sea; but there they roar, they dash, in vain, they cannot move that adorable Victim, or disturb the heavenly calmness which reigns upon His brow. In vain do they refuse Him a drop of water to quench His burning thirst, in vain do they insult His agonies and mock at the last throes of His pain and anguish. Nothing can extinguish the love which burns in His Heart for them, it is stronger than hatred, stronger than His enemies' infernal rage, stronger than agony, nay, it is stronger than death. Many waters cannot quench it, neither can floods drown it, it is strong, eternal, unquenchable. The sun has withdrawn its light, the Altar of Sacrifice is enveloped in clouds and thick darkness, and all those who yet remain upon the hill of Calvary are seized with mortal fear. Forsaken alike by God and Man, Jesus is absorbed in prayer and love; He prays to His Father in heaven, and His sacred Heart, though well-nigh drained of blood, is not emptied of its love, it is not satisfied with offering itself. He has given us all, and yet He still seeks to give us more; His dying eyes are bent to the earth, He sees Himself abandoned by every one, save His Mother only. Mary is there, standing at the foot of the sacrificial altar.

She is plunged into a sea of sorrows, but she is more loving, more holy, more sublime than ever she was before. She stands there, ready to pour

into His Heart those treasures of love and tenderness which a mother only can bestow. But she is also there to inflict unconsciously the most poignant of all His sorrows upon His divine Heart. For Jesus knows what is passing in the agonized heart of His Mother. He feels the bitter suffering which His sufferings inflict upon her. He alone is capable of understanding, of feeling, the depth and fulness of the love which exists for Him in Mary's heart; that love is His dearest treasure, and even that last cherished joy and happiness, He bestowed with His dying Hand upon us, by giving His Mother to us for our mother, and desiring her to love us as she had loved Himself.

And now the Veins of Jesus are completely emptied of their sacred Blood. He has no more Blood to give us, but He still gives us love; His Wounds are inflamed, but they are less burning than His Heart. His lips are parched with thirst and burning fever, His panting breast completely dislocated by the cruel tension of His arms upon the Cross, still faintly, painfully heaves in the effort to bestow upon us His last sighs of love; and now His Heart ceases to beat, and its last pulsation seems to utter still, "I love you."

It is consummated! Jesus dies, the one great Victim is offered; the Father's justice is satisfied, and the decree of our eternal condemnation is torn in pieces by the Hand of Mercy at the foot of His Throne: the last sigh of Jesus has ascended to the gates of heaven, and now these gates are opened to us, they will never more be closed; repentant man may sit down with the angels of heaven in the kingdom of our Lord, and the first

soul which follows the Holy Soul of our Redeemer to those blest abodes, is that of the poor penitent thief, who suffered by the side of our Saviour's Cross, and whose amazing faith recognised His Divinity and proclaimed His innocence, as He hung like a malefactor upon the tree of shame; that thrice happy soul, presented by the Hands of Jesus to His heavenly Father, as the first fruits of His sufferings; the price of the very first drop of Blood which was drawn from Him upon the Cross.

V.—*The Altar.*

All is consummated now: the sufferings of the august Victim are over, His cross, triumphant over sin and hell, is lifted up before the whole world for its regeneration and illumination. Humanity is saved. Hell is vanquished. God is glorified, and full reparation is made to His glory and justice, for the injury offered to them by our sins. But though the work of our redemption is now fully accomplished, yet redeeming love is not exhausted; the love which is stronger than death, has survived the immolation of the adorable Victim, and by the most wonderful of all its inventions, it has found means to raise to Him new Calvaries on every shore. Let us fall prostrate and adore, for we are kneeling at the feet of Him who died for us; the altar is another Golgotha, and though Jesus does not still suffer there, yet does He still immolate Himself there for us.

"From the north to the south," says the prophet Malachi; "from the rising of the sun, even



unto the going down thereof, My Name shall be great among the nations of the earth, and a spotless Victim shall be offered unto My Name." And in fulfilment of this promise, we see that no sooner is the sacrifice of Jesus consummated, than all the former sacrifices, which were the figures of His sacrifice, suddenly cease; the Gospel messengers, the preachers of good-tidings, pass over the whole earth; the ancient altars are overthrown, the blood of beasts ceases to flow; new altars are raised upon the ruins of the ancient shrines; and for eighteen hundred years the blood shed upon Calvary has never ceased its mystic flow; for eighteen centuries, the one Spotless Victim, ever immolated and ever living for us, has never ceased to be offered; and never more will cease until that day, when the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll, and the Son of Man shall appear in His glory, to execute judgment upon all, to reprove the ungodly for all the works of their ungodliness, and to render to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality,—eternal life.

Yes, each altar in our churches is another Calvary, where Jesus still offers Himself for us, with the same love which inflamed His Sacred Heart upon the mount of expiation; each hour, each instant of the night and day the Blood of our redemption flows upon millions of human souls, it flows for the whole world: and the Voice of that Blood, far more powerful than the blood of Abel, cries incessantly to God not for vengeance, but for mercy; "Forgive them, Father," it cries, "for they know not what they do." And though the

sins of men are multiplied upon earth, although their iniquities are unceasingly provoking the just vengeance of heaven, it seems that a mysterious power keeps back the Almighty Arm which is ready to execute judgment upon sinners. Often we are amazed at the patience, the long-suffering of God, who suffers Himself to be continually offended with impunity, and we ask with astonishment, "Why does not the Lord avenge Himself upon these sinners? Why does He suffer them to offend Him with impunity?" Ah! when we look at the altar, we shall not need to ask that question again! The tabernacle is the rampart which protects the sinner from the Almighty justice of God. When God looks upon the guilty world, He beholds His Son standing between the sinner and Himself: He cannot strike the offender, unless He strikes him through the Heart of His own well-beloved Son, and that adorable Heart ever cries to Him for mercy, saying, "Pardon, pardon, O my Father, spare these sinners. I am their Surety, I have paid all their debt, and ransomed them with My Blood."

## VI.

And how could it be otherwise? How could the just anger of God continue in presence of the altar? For if that adorable Victim humbled Himself upon Calvary, His humiliation is greater still in the most holy Eucharist, and if His Body's Passion is consummated, the sorrows of His Heart continue still. The Victim, once offered, liveth

for evermore. He prays, He loves us tenderly as before, and His voice will most assuredly be heard in heaven. Yes, I may venture to say boldly, that Jesus suffers more humiliation, and in a certain sense, receives more injury and offence upon the altar than He did even upon Calvary. When we cast our eyes upon those fragile species of bread and wine, we may indeed exclaim with the prophet Isaias, "We have seen Him, and there is no beauty that we should desire Him, He hath no form nor comeliness: He is despised and rejected of men." For it is not even the splendours of His Divinity alone which are hidden by the Eucharistic veils, His humanity also is entirely concealed by them. On Calvary His Body was disfigured, covered with wounds and blood, but it was at least *visible*, whilst in the Holy Eucharist we behold nothing but a piece of bread. And here again must we have recourse to faith, who softly says to us, "This Mystic Bread, this simple species is God, let us adore Him." Upon the Cross the voice of Jesus in His Death agony was plainly heard, and His last words revealed His Divinity to all by-standers, for though He died the death of a criminal, He spoke with God-like power and authority, when He promised a speedy entrance into the gates of Paradise to the poor sufferer dying at His side. But no sound issues from the tabernacle, the Word of the Father seems to have returned to His eternal silence, and the voice of God who *hides* Himself from man, that He may *bestow* Himself upon man, who dwells in deep silence that we may hear His voice, that still small voice is heard by the soul alone.

It is because He loves us that the God of the Holy Eucharist hides Himself thus : it is pure love which causes Him to bury Himself in these depths of self-abasement, deeper even than those which encompassed His mortal life ; it is to give us freer access to His Presence that He veils His glory ; to render our faith more meritorious that He deprives us of the sight of His holy humanity ; it is to give us courage to receive Him that He makes Himself so little and so lowly : and yet, is He treated better by us whom He calls His friends and brethren, than He was by those whom He called His chosen people ? Alas, even now, impiety and irreligion pursue Him, and daily crucify the Son of God afresh ; and though His enemies are no longer able to shed His Blood, yet they continually tread it under foot by making His redemption of none effect, and rend His mystical Body by depriving Him of the souls whom He purchased so dearly with His own Blood. Jesus still thirsts upon the altar, He thirsts for a little love, and how few pious souls are eager to quench the thirst of His adorable Heart ; how many, on the contrary, give the love which is His due to creatures who are unworthy of it, and refuse to bring a drop of the overflowing treasure of their affections to gladden His Sacred Heart !

And here, too, is Jesus forsaken, deserted by men, solitude reigns around His altars ; a few worshippers come now and then to repose under the shade of His tabernacle, and often do those who call themselves His friends pretend they cannot find one hour in the day, in the week, to bestow upon the God who has been made by love

their prisoner and their captive. Alas, Jesus is not weary of loving men, but it would seem that men are weary of His love; He is not weary of bestowing His graces, but they would seem to be weary of receiving them.

And does not Jesus seem to be even more grievously deserted upon the altar than when He was on Calvary? The Son of God is insulted, outraged, and blasphemed, and the Father seems to turn away His Head, and to give Him up once again to the scorn and hatred of His enemies. His adorable Body is profaned, and yet no fire from heaven descends upon the sacrilegious sinners, no deep abyss opens beneath their feet. Ah, it is because God beholds these sinners only through the wounds of His well-beloved Son, it is because the Victim of Calvary is still offered upon our altars, because Jesus in the tabernacle prays for us and loves us still, because He gives us love in return for our hatred, indifference and ingratitude, because He repays our desertion of Him by still greater tenderness and devotion, because in short, the Heart of Jesus hidden in the tabernacle contains a Fount of love and mercy which flows unceasingly to cleanse and save the world.

## VII.

When we meditate seriously upon the sufferings and humiliations endured by the Word Incarnate, do we not sometimes feel a strong impulse to offer to Him some reparation for the sorrows endured by His Sacred Heart? Do we not earnestly wish

that it had been our lot to be present at the performance of the great drama of the Passion, that we might have mingled, not indeed with the crowd of enemies who beset Him, but in the ranks of His friends! that we might have joined that little band of saintly women, who followed Him to Calvary, in company with the Queen of martyrs, and the disciple whom Jesus loved? Oh, if we could have been permitted to kneel before our Saviour's Cross, and to pay Him the public homage of our adoration and love, in presence of the crowd who derided and blasphemed Him, how happy we think we should have been. Yes, we must all have ardently wished to quench the thirst of Jesus, to draw out the nails which attached Him to the Cross, to bind up His wounds, and lay His throbbing Head to rest upon our bosom. But what we were not permitted to do then, it is in our power to do to-day. Jesus is there, He still awaits us on that new Calvary where He offers Himself for us, where the world still gives Him to drink the vinegar and gall of hatred, outrage, and contempt. Let us hasten then to perform the office of love which we seem so ardently to desire.

The God of the Holy Eucharist is the same as the God of Calvary; He merits all our love upon the altar, as He merited it upon the Cross. Let us then vie with each other in pressing to swell the number of His worshippers; and bringing our hearts to lay on the altar at His feet, let us hasten to pass through the fast increasing floods of indifference, ingratitude and contempt with which the world surrounds Him, and win our way to the Ark in which He silently reposes, to heal the

wounds of His Sacred Heart by the precious balm of gratitude and love.

Especially in these days of benediction, when Jesus is placed upon the altar, as upon a throne, where He awaits our homage and our love; let us not leave Him solitary and alone, let us form a Guard of Honour about His Throne, let the burning love of our hearts surround His Sacred Heart with a crown of love; and then let us do yet more: let us take Jesus down from the Cross on which He is detained by the cold indifference of men; let us make a throne for Him in our souls, let us entreat Him to come and take up His abode upon the living altar of our hearts, and when Jesus is ours indeed, when we really participate in His Sacrifice, when we feed upon the adorable Body of the One Victim once offered for us, O, let us then shed tears of repentance upon His Wounds, let us weep for our own faults, let us weep for the faults of our brethren, let us bind up all His Wounds with the soft bands of love, let us love, but let us love *immeasurably* the God who loved us, and gave Himself for us, Who died for us, and now lives with us and in us. Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE FIFTH  
DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

I adore Thee, O my Jesus, who art hidden and humiliated for my love; my faith pierces the clouds which conceal Thee from my sight, and under the veil of the sacred species which hide at once the glory of Thy Divinity and the charms of

Thy adorable Humanity, I acknowledge and adore the God who died for me.

Suffer me, O my God, to adore that adorable Body, which from pure love to me Thou didst abandon to the rage and fury of men, to all the vengeance of Heaven: He is there, by faith I behold that Sacred Body, which upon the cross presented to the sight of men one vast and grievous wound; that Body stiffened in death, consigned to the tomb, and raised again in glory unspeakable; that Body which is daily immolated upon our altars, which is the Bread that nourishes our souls, the life by which they live, the glorious pledge of their immortality. O, for ever be Thou blessed, adored, and praised, O most sacred Body, who art at once the Sun of the heavenly and of the earthly Jerusalem, who dost enlighten Thy Church in heaven with the splendours of Thy glory, while Thou dost warm and bless Thy Church on earth with the soft rays of Thy love; blessed be Thou and adored for ever, Thou our Shield and Defence, our Treasure and our Hope, our Lord and our God.

I adore Thee, sacred Head of my Divine Saviour, which was once crowned with thorns and laid to rest upon the hard bed of the cross. O that I could replace that sanguinary crown by a diadem of glory; that I could surround Thy brow with a circlet of love from the grateful hearts of all Thy children. I adore, O my Saviour, those adorable eyes which were so often filled with tears at the thought of all the sins which I was one day to commit; those eyes closed in death upon the tree of the cross, but opened upon the altar to behold,



my sorrow and repentance. Turn them upon me, O most merciful Jesus, cast upon my soul, and upon the souls of all poor sinners, a glance like that which melted the heart of Thy faithless apostle, and inflamed his soul with never-dying love.

I adore Thee, O sacred mouth of my Redeemer, that mouth which excused Thy cruel executioners, which prayed for them, which promised to the penitent thief a place in Paradise at Thy side. I adore that sacred mouth which prayed for me so frequently, and from which, upon the evening before Thy death, issued these ever-memorable words: "And not for these only who are with Me do I pray, O My Father, but for those also which through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the creation of the world. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we also are one."—(St. John, xvii. 20.)

O let that adorable mouth open once more, O my Lord, let it speak to me one word of mercy and of life. Tell me, I implore Thee, sweet mouth of my Jesus, tell me that Thou art pleased to see me here; that Thou forgivest me and lovest me; and my mouth, interpreting the ardent wishes of my heart, will answer that I am ready to follow Thee everywhere, to accompany Thy sacred steps not alone to Thabor and to Calvary, not only to

Thy feasts of love, but also to prison and to death.

I adore Thee, merciful ears of the God of mercy and compassion, ever open to the heartfelt cries of repentant sinners, as they were open upon the cross to the prayer of the penitent thief.

And still upon the altars they are open to the voice of prayer, to the cry of affliction, as well as to the entreaty of repentance, and the piteous call of innocence oppressed; listen favourably, then, to my humble complaint, and accept my heartfelt sorrow and tender grateful love.

I adore Thee, O adorable hands of my Blessed Saviour, which have been so often lifted to heaven to implore the mercy of God for my sins; so often extended to us poor sinners on earth, to raise us when we fall. O blessed for ever be those sacred hands, which are stretched out upon Thy children in absolution and blessing; which were pierced and nailed to the cross for us, and which still retain the marks of the wounds inflicted upon Thee, O adorable Lord, in the house of Thy friends, those wounds which are such glorious proofs of Thy love for us, and which remind us of our right, obtained through them, of hoping for every grace and blessing which Thy adorable Heart is ever ready to bestow.

Thy arms are ever open to us, O my Jesus, on the altar now as erst on Calvary, and they are opened to us as a safe refuge against the wrath and justice of Thy Father; suffer me, then, to take refuge in those adorable arms, O my Lord and my Saviour, grant me a safe asylum in Thy sacred wounds, nail my soul to Thy cross, with

the nails wherewith Thou wert nailed to it, attach it to Thy holy Eucharist with the ties of ardent love, that nothing may evermore be able to separate it from Thy hands.

It is no longer blood that flows from those wounds in Thy hands, O my Jesus, it is the *fruits* of that precious blood that now fill them most abundantly; they are full of grace to overflowing, those sacred wounds, which they gladly bestow upon all who desire to receive it. Open then, O my Lord, those fountains of life, the waters of which spring up unto life eternal, pour them out freely upon us, upon our families, upon our friends and our enemies, but pour them out more especially, O Lord, upon our enemies, upon those poor sinners whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood: let those salutary waters flow over them in torrents, let them overflow and surround them on all sides, let them soften their hard hearts, and bring them quickly, and bind them fast to the foot of Thine altar, as fresh trophies of Thine all-powerful grace, and of the power of Thy mercy and Thy love.

Suffer me also, O my Jesus, to adore Thy sacred feet; those divine feet which have so far and so wearily pursued Thy wandering sheep; which have paused so often to wait for our tardy approach to Thee, and at which the sinner and the sorrowful ones have ever found a refuge.

O blessed and adored for ever be the sacred feet of my Saviour, at which the repentant Magdalen wept and prayed, and found an eternal haven of repose; adorable feet, which were nailed to the tree of the cross, and are even now bound

fast to the altar by the bands of love: Suffer me, O my Jesus, Thou who didst never break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, suffer me to repose at Thy sacred feet, that sweet abode of the innocent child and the repentant sinner. There only will I rest, there will I take up my abode, forgetting the world, forgetting myself, remembering only Thee and Thy supreme and wondrous love.

But I see yet one more wound upon Thy sacred body, O my Jesus, it is the wound of Thy heart. This wound is ever open wide, it did not close in death; it was Thy will that Thy divine heart should remain ever open, that we might at all times fly thither as to our safest, dearest refuge and home. There, there alone do I desire to live and die; there will I ever seek the sovereign remedy for every ill; consolation in sorrow, enlightenment in perplexity, strength in weakness, and courage to make all the sacrifices which Thy grace may henceforth require of me.

O Mary, queen of martyrs, ever-blessed Mother of the God of the Cross and of the Holy Eucharist, thou didst follow Him to Calvary, and thy heart crucified with that of thy Divine Son echoed faithfully each sorrow and pain which He endured, thou who after His death didst sustain thy life by means of the Holy Eucharist alone, and who wast the first and most excellent and perfect adorer of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of His love; obtain for me a portion of that love wherewith thou hast loved Jesus, and some participation in that spirit of devotedness and self-sacrifice, which caused thee to follow the steps of thy Divine Son

to Calvary, and to consent freely to the immolation of the august Victim of our salvation. O Mary, Mother of Jesus, thou art our mother also ; take pity then on thy poor children, and suffer them not to make thy sufferings, and the sufferings of thy Divine Son, of none effect through their transgressions. Jesus thirsts. He thirsts for our souls : do thou, sweet mother, quench the thirst of thy dear Son, by drawing to His altar and around His Cross many of those souls who do not yet love Him, but who are loved by Him and were created for His love. Amen.

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## SIXTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

### THE BLOOD OF REDEMPTION.

“ Take, drink, this is My Blood, the Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you.”

#### I.—*The shedding of the Blood of our Redemption.*

The offence which had been given by sin to God, and the injury and defilement which it had caused to the soul of man, could not be washed out except in blood. But where could there be found a blood so precious and so pure that it could wash out the offence which had been caused to the infinite Majesty of the Most High : that it could not only cleanse the soul of man from all defilement, but also heal the deep and ghastly

wound which had been made in it by sin? For, alas, the blood which flows in the veins of all the children of Adam, was like his own, impure, and contaminated by the poison of sin, and if all the blood in the veins of the whole human race could have flowed upon the altars of the living God, it could neither have availed to satisfy His justice, nor to efface from His sight the very least stain of sin in their impure and polluted souls.

And yet it was God's decree that without shedding of blood there could be no remission, and man knowing this, caused the blood of bulls and of goats to flow freely upon His altars for the space of four thousand years. Did the blood then of these animals possess an expiatory virtue which did not belong to the blood of man? And did God find in its effusion a satisfaction which could make amends to His justice for the sins of the human race?

No, this could not be so, but after the fall of man God promised him a Redeemer to make satisfaction to the Divine Justice, and to heal the wounds which sin had inflicted upon his own soul, and man comprehended that this Redeemer, who was to be born of his own race, was to be an offering for sin, a Victim to the Justice of God, and that He was to be perfectly pure and holy, separate from sinners; also, that He was to belong to man by His human nature, and to God by His Divine Nature, and that it was by suffering and voluntary self-sacrifice that He was to pay the debt which we had incurred, and to reconcile man to God. From age to age the seers and prophets of Israel lifted up their voices to announce the coming

liberator, describing by turns His greatness and His self-abasement, His sufferings and His triumphs, thus shedding clearer light upon this glorious truth as time rolled on, and the blood of the victims offered to the Lord, flowed as a figure only of the Blood of that adorable Victim who was daily expected to appear.

It was not only the feeling of his own guilt and inability to offer to the Lord a sufficient expiation and satisfaction, that led man in general to have recourse to the effusion of blood, in order to appease the wrath of God. The Lord Himself commanded His chosen people to offer Him these sanguinary sacrifices, to shed the blood of bulls and goats as an offering for sin ; and before He brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, He commanded every family amongst them to take a lamb without spot, to kill it in each of their dwellings, and to strike its blood upon the lintels and door-posts of their houses, that the destroying angel might see it, and pass by, and spare those abodes which were marked by the blood of the lamb.

And the flesh of the animal was to be eaten by the inhabitants of each house, and afterwards, if we follow the people of Israel through their wanderings in the desert, on their way to the Land of Promise, we find Moses immolating victims at the foot of the mountain from which the Lord of Hosts delivered the law to His chosen seed ; he poured out the blood of these victims upon the altar, and sprinkled it also upon the people, when they had sworn to observe and keep the commandments delivered unto them, and as he sprinkled it

upon them he made use of these deeply significant words : " Behold the Blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you."

From that day forward, innumerable sacrifices were offered to the God of Israel : the altars in His temple were unceasingly deluged with the blood of victims, and the most careless observer can see without difficulty, that God could take no pleasure in this effusion of blood which was practised in compliance not merely with His permission, but with His actual and stringent command, save in so far as it was a figure of the effusion of that Divine Blood, which was in after times to be offered upon Calvary.

All the saints of the Old Testament understood this truth most fully : they turned away from the altar, reeking with the blood of slaughtered oxen and goats, to rest their hearts upon the thought of that stainless Victim, who should be hereafter offered to wash away in His own Blood the iniquities of the whole world. To that spotless Victim they rendered the homage of their hearts ; it was that precious Blood which was hereafter to flow for their salvation, that they adored in anticipation ; it was for that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness that Isaias, David, and Malachi were so ardently athirst : it was that sacred stream which they longed for, and continually implored from the mercy of God. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so did those sacred souls pant and sigh for Calvary's pure stream.

And even amongst the most barbarous people, and nations which are strangers to the true God, we still find sacrifices in continual use, and we see



that the victims were chosen from amongst the purest and most innocent beings which they could possibly obtain.

What reason could there be for this? It was because the children of Adam in all their most distant wanderings, had still retained one thought which was first revealed to our great forefather in the bowers of Eden, one earnest of happier times to come, even the promise of a Redeemer, of a pure and spotless Victim, whose death was to obtain the salvation of the whole human race. This primeval tradition is preserved in some shape or another by all the descendants of our first father, though frequently distorted and disfigured by ignorance, error, or superstition.

All that was figurative in the constitution of these sacrifices, became very quickly effaced from the memory of these gross and earthly-minded nations: they mistook the shadow for the reality, the sign for the thing signified. And from this cause arose the madness, the cruel aberration of those people and nations, who caused to fall beneath the sacrificial sword such numbers of human victims, chosen because of their simplicity and innocence; from this also arose that sacramental word of the Druids which they used when they offered human victims upon their dolmens or sacrificial altars. "Unless the defilement of our guilty race be washed away in the blood of a man, the wrath of the gods will never be appeased." But alas, the sacrifice of so many innocent victims, far from appeasing the anger of God, offended Him still more deeply.

The Divine Justice indignantly rejected these

offerings of blood, shed by the cruelty and superstition of men, which were offered also to their own false divinities instead of to the Lord of heaven and earth, and even the sacrifices which were offered to Him by His own chosen people were only acceptable in so far as they were offered in the spirit of Faith, and with due regard to the merits of the Redeemer who was yet to come.

## II.

He appeared at length, that spotless Lamb of God, whose blood was to take away the sins of the whole world. At once High Priest and Victim, holy, undefiled, true Son of Man, yet separate from the mass of sinners, and higher than the highest heavens, He comes to offer Himself as a voluntary Victim to the justice of God, and to sign with His Blood that treaty of peace between God and Man which He comes on earth to conclude.

Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of the good things to come, as we are told by the apostle of the Gentiles, having come into the world, entered once for all into the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by His own Blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Hebrews ix. 12.) Yes, it is by the effusion of blood that Jesus has redeemed us: it is that Precious Blood which made satisfaction for us to the Justice of God:

which justifies us in the sight of God, restores our rights to our celestial inheritance, and is an eternal source of life and salvation to all those who apply its merits to themselves by means of faith, love, and repentance.

Jesus has bestowed it liberally upon us, that Divine Blood, He gives it to us not in drops but in torrents : one single drop of His Blood would have far outweighed the crimes of a thousand worlds, even had they been thickly peopled with beings as evil as Satan himself. But though one drop of His Blood would have been a sufficient satisfaction to the Justice of God for the sins of the whole world, yet Jesus gave us every drop that flowed in His veins, because He willed to offer a superabundant satisfaction to His Father's Justice, and not only to prove to us His love, but the excess of His love, to show us, in fact, that He loved us, not only as a mother loves her child, or a friend his friend, but as only a God can love.

And how eager is our Jesus to shed His adorable Blood ! Dawn is now about to appear, the dawn of the day on which He is to suffer for our sakes ; that day is not fully come, and as yet no executioners surround the adorable Victim who gives Himself for our salvation. He is praying alone, under the olive trees of Gethsemane ; the most precious invention of His love has but just been given by Him to this ungrateful world, but already have the joys of the eucharistic banquet given place to the sorrows of His bitter agony. Prostrate in presence of the Majesty of His Father, He offers Himself willingly to death, He accepts all the torments of His Passion, and the offended

Justice of God weighs Him to the very earth, it demands of Him all its rights, it exacts from Him who has become the Satisfaction and Surety of the human race, the whole debt which was due from all mankind to God, the whole debt, even to the uttermost farthing. The Heart of our Redeemer is weighed down, and hemmed in on every side, fear and anguish and sorrow bear Him to the very dust, and His Sacred Blood becomes so subtilised and refined by sorrow and love, that it oozes through all the pores of His Body, and trickles down His forehead in heavy drops, mingling with His tears, tingeing His vestments with a ruddy dye, and even falling to the ground upon which He lies extended in His Agony.

And a second effusion of Blood soon followed this first blood-shedding which had been caused by love alone. Let us contemplate our adorable Lord bound to the pillar of flagellation; His flesh is torn off in strips by the lashes of the executioners; His body furrowed by long, deep wounds, is soon but one great sore, from whence the blood flows forth in streams. That divine blood has stained the pillar, and the knotted ends of the scourges; it springs forth almost to the hands of the barbarous perpetrators of that fearful torment; their feet are bathed in the blood which trickles down upon the pavement of the Prætorium, and lies in a pool around. Jesus is truly now glorious in His vestments, red in His apparel, "and His garments, like him that treadeth the wine-press," (Isaias, lxiii. 2); or, rather, He is in His own Person that mysterious Vine which is pressed and trodden in the wine-press of the wrath

of Almighty God, and He bestows abundantly upon us that rich new wine, of which His saints will drink for ever in the kingdom of their God.

But some blood yet remains in the veins of Jesus, and His Heart's loving desires will not be satisfied until that life-giving essence is entirely exhausted. When He reached the altar of sacrifice upon Calvary, He extended Himself willingly upon it; the nails were driven into His hands and feet; the cross was raised on high, and His pierced limbs straightway became fresh fountains of life and healing, from which the blood flowed forth in pure abundant streams. And that adorable blood empurpled the cross, and the garments of Magdalen, who lay at its feet, who pressed it in her arms, and rested her head lovingly against it, because it supported the dying form of Him who is love itself. That sacred blood streamed down upon the earth, it never ceased to flow until the fountain was dried up by death, and the very last drop fell, as the Incarnate God heaved His last sigh.

But let us never forget that it was love, and love alone, which caused our Jesus to shed His precious blood, so freely, so abundantly: and that He gave us that precious blood, not sorrowfully or reluctantly, but with eagerness and joy, that He desired and longed to shed it for us, and that His heart loved our souls with such intensity and holy passion, that He said to His apostles: "I have a baptism (of blood) to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." He has shed it all now, this blood of our redemption, and that not only for the world in general, but for

every one of our souls in particular, as truly and really as if that soul were the only one to be benefited by the fruits of that most Precious Blood. And each one of us may claim it as his own peculiar possession and heritage; each one of us may plead its all prevailing merits in the sight of God, and offer it to Him as the redeeming ransom of his soul.

### III.

Love never says, "it is enough;" the more it gives, the more it desires to give, and even utter inability to give more does not destroy its thirst for making still further sacrifices for the welfare of the object so devotedly loved. The veins of Jesus were now exhausted of their blood, the throbbing of His divine heart was arrested by the cold hand of death; but in that sacred heart a few drops of blood were still inclosed, which He desired to give us, as well as all the rest, so that even after His death He desired and permitted yet another wound to be inflicted upon His most adorable body, the soldier pierced His side with a lance, and penetrated to the depths of that loving Heart, that the very last drops of blood which had been hidden there, might also be bestowed upon us. O most marvellous, most wonderful love of my Saviour and my God! He sheds His very heart's blood upon the world like drops of cool refreshing dew, to satisfy His Father's justice, that the cup of the vengeance and wrath of Almighty God may not be poured out upon the guilty heads of defenceless sinners.

When we consider the wondrous prodigality of the love wherewith God hath loved us, when we regard the rivers of blood which were shed to redeem a guilty world, the soul is stupified, as it were, with astonishment, and cannot contain the overwhelming gush of gratitude and love which is like to overwhelm it; but when we proceed to think not only of the sufferings which our dear Redeemer underwent in shedding His blood for us; but also of the sacrilegious contempt with which it was treated, and the horrible profanations which were lavished upon it in His passion hour, then indeed are our spirits overwhelmed with bitter sorrow, with an immense and pressing desire to make reparation, and with that religious fear which causes the soul to faint and fail in terror-stricken amazement at the sight of such fearful sacrilege.

The soul which lovingly contemplates this deep and awful mystery of the sufferings and death of the Incarnate God, would have desired to see that precious blood to which the Divinity never ceased to be united, even when it was separated from the sacred Body of the Lord; reverently received by angels in cups of gold, and conveyed to heaven by their loving care, there to be preserved until His resurrection day. But to what unutterable depths of humiliation has our Blessed Lord descended for our sakes! that adorable blood not only stained and clung to the inanimate objects which received it, such as the pillar of flagellation, the scourges of the executioners, and the cross, objects which it sanctified, and which *inflicted upon it no profanation*; but it also streamed down upon the

ground, was trampled under the feet of the soldiers and executioners, sprinkled their armour and their clothing, was mingled with the mud and dust in the streets of Jerusalem, upon which our Blessed Lord left the bloody traces of His steps, and was carried away on the shoes of the passers by. And what respect was paid to this blood of God Incarnate? how did they treat it? Alas! it was regarded as a vile and contemptible thing, it was scorned as the blood of a great criminal; the spectators of His torments rejoiced to see it flow, and trampled it under their feet with contumely and scorn, the mildest amongst them esteemed it a worthless thing, the blood of a slave, of the vilest of the people; nay, more, so blinded were they by the acrimonious language and bitter abuse levelled at Him by the high priests and pharisees, that they all considered Jesus a mere impostor and common cheat, His violent death appeared to them to be an act of justice, and His blood, in their opinion, was only worthy to be absorbed by that soil which had so often on Mount Calvary been saturated with the blood of thieves and malefactors, who had suffered there the last punishment of the law, and whose whitened bones, considered unworthy of the rites of sepulture, were scattered amongst the stones and withered grass upon that mountain of ignominy and shame, which was called in the expressive language of the Jews, *Golgotha*, a place of skulls. And thus did men esteem that precious blood of their redemption, which was shed to deliver them from eternal death, and to assure them a life of eternal happiness; at the thought of such blindness, such ingratitude, our hearts are



ready to break with regret and shame ; we would have given worlds to save that adorable blood from such fearful profanation, and to reproach that nation of Deicides with their sacrilege and their crime ; but let us rather turn our indignation upon ourselves, and reserve for our own hearts the reproaches which we are so eager to address to the Jews. For have we not been still more guilty and ungrateful than that rebellious people who trampled under foot the blood of our redemption, seeing that we are possessed of the light of faith, which from them had been withheld ? Even in our cradles, did not the sacred sign of our salvation hang in visible benediction over our infant heads ? Did not our mothers consecrate the first fruits of our childish lips to God, by causing them to murmur the sweet name of Jesus, first of all earthly sounds ; of Jesus, the friend and protector of our childhood, and to whom we ought to cling with more constant love, now in our riper years ? And when we sat on our mothers' knees, and listened to their instructions, did not they teach us how much we owe to Jesus, before they spoke of our duty to themselves ? And yet we forgot all these teachings in after times, and how often have we followed the mad impulse of our passions, and rushed tumultuously on in the path of wickedness, treading the blood of Jesus underfoot by our sins, and casting ruthlessly away the precious fruits of our Redeemer's sufferings ?

IV.—*The personal application of our Redeemer's Blood.*

But let us now be comforted, and let the blood which has been shed for us be still our hope, as it will be our salvation. Let us draw near unto Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the Church of the first born, who are written in the heavens, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Hebrews, xii. 22.)

This city of the living God, of which the holy apostle speaks, is the Church of Christ, of which we have the happiness of being members; that Mount Sion, on which the voice of Jesus, the great Mediator, is for ever heard, is the altar of our God; and that blood of aspersion, which speaketh better than that of Abel, is the Blood of Jesus, which flows continually upon all Catholic altars, to implore grace and mercy for poor sinners.

Jesus left us that precious and adorable blood, in the most Holy Eucharist, He gave it to us, it is our own, our possession, our treasure. Jesus is upon that altar, and that blood which love drew from the veins of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani, which was shed forth in the Prætorium, which flowed freely in the streets of Jerusalem,

and saturated the earth of Calvary; that Divine Blood, which was scorned, profaned, trampled under feet of men, on that awful first Good Friday, that sacred blood is present there before our eyes, and we may not only surround it with the homage of our adoration and love, but we may make what use of it we will, we may apply its merits to ourselves, and offer it to God in expiation for our offences, and to draw down upon us His blessings and His grace.

The blood of Jesus cries upon the altar, and its voice is so powerful that it penetrates to the highest heaven, and reaches the very heart of God. But the blood of Jesus does not, like Abel's, cry for vengeance, it cries to God for mercy, grace, and love for all the human race.

It is most certain that there is not one amongst us who would look at the cross and say, "I am innocent of the blood of that Just One;" and any one who should do so, would render himself guilty of the falsehood uttered by that unjust judge, who condemned our Lord to death: rather may we all repeat, in the words of the unfaithful apostle, not despairingly, indeed, but with humble penitence and love: "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood;" but suffer that blood, which is my hope, and the price of my salvation, to wash my soul, O Lord, from all its iniquities and sins; then shall my soul, were it black as the tents of Kedar, become white as the lily which uncloses its pure buds to the earliest morning rays, white as the snow new fallen upon the mountain's topmost peak. Ah, if we thus entreat the Lord, He will not say to us, as once He did to Cain, "Cursed

art thou from the earth, because she hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." (Gen. iv. 11.) But He will answer rather, "Blessed art thou because thy Saviour's blood has been shed for thee, and grace and mercy flow abundantly from His wounds." And the blood of Jesus Christ, thus become our possession, bestows upon us a sort of almighty power, which makes us prevail over the power of God Himself, because He can refuse nothing to the soul that prays to Him, when she joins the voice of her supplication to the voice of the adorable blood of our Lord ; and that precious blood is the fountain of life in which the rivers of God's mercy take their rise, the rivers which flow continually to water the Church and the world. And well we know that the Church presents no request to God, save in the name of her Divine Spouse, and through the merits of His most precious blood.

And we may all draw freely from that heavenly fountain which feeds the rivers of God's mercy and love ; it is near to us, it is there upon our altars, and we find it in the Heart of the God of the most Holy Eucharist. O how strong, how mighty is the priest when he stands before the altar, holding the chalice in his hands and raising it towards heaven ! Ah, then the man entirely disappears, or, rather he becomes great with some shadow of the greatness of the Eternal High Priest, in whose place he stands, and who immolates Himself by his hands. His own nothingness, meanness, and imperfections, all vanish and disappear under that mantle of imperial purple, stained in the blood of the Incarnate God ; the angels reverentially sur-

round him, joyful at being permitted to witness the awful sacrifice; they overshadow him with their wings, and scatter around him, from their golden censers, the sweet incense of the prayers which they collect from the lips of the saints. But when the God, whom angels adore in heaven, comes down into the hands of the priest, when the celebrant offers to the Lord the chalice of salvation, filled with the blood which redeemed the world, then, in deep awe and trembling reverence, the angels veil their faces with their wings, and lovingly adore the Angel of great Counsel, who has become the sin-offering for man, and who has raised His priest to a dignity far greater than that of any angel. And God contemplates the altar with complacency, He sees nothing there but His own well-beloved Son, immolating Himself once again for His glory and man's salvation; He hears only the voice of His blood, which ascends to Him with an odour of sweetness; then the priest may ask what he will, he may even, so to speak, issue His commands to God, for when he holds the chalice in his hands, does he not hold the key of the Father's Heart?

And we also, notwithstanding our weakness, our nothingness, we become strong and powerful when we kneel before the holy altar, and bend low before the mysterious shadow of this chalice of our salvation; then we become in a certain sense priests with the priest, when we unite with him in offering the adorable blood of Jesus to God. Yes, then we have power with the Lord, and may prevail, we may ask what we will, and it shall be given unto us; if we ask in faith, He can refuse

us nothing, for another voice pleads for us, in all-prevailing tones, it is the voice of our Mediator, the voice of the blood which He once shed, and still continually offers for us.

## V.

But it is not enough for us to ask of God the graces which we need, through the merits of His Son's most precious blood, we must also apply those merits to ourselves in a manner still more efficacious; we must receive that precious blood into our own veins; we must become incorporated with it, we must tinge our hearts with that purple dye, and receive it into our inmost souls by means of Holy Communion.

Our Jesus, the true pelican of love, summons every one of His children to Himself, not only that He may shelter them under the shadow of His wings, and press them to His Heart in chaste and tender embraces of fervent love; He desires a still more intimate union than this with the souls who are redeemed by His blood; and deep in His wounded side, into the very inmost recesses of His Heart He calls them to come, to hide themselves there, to feed upon the blood which ever flows a mystic fountain from His wound, and He even vouchsafes to die mystically for their sakes, that He may impart to them a life of full, never-ending grace in this life, and a life of unspeakable joy, and glory, and happiness throughout eternity.

As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so let us pant and sigh for this water of life and im-

mortality; let us pant with heavenly thirst for the precious blood of our Jesus, for that rich wine which strengthens the weak, which brings forth virgins, which inebriates the soul with the holy and exquisite delights of love. Let us thirst, thirst continually for Jesus, for His adorable blood; let our sacred thirst be never quenched, or rather let us go to Jesus and ask Him to quench it, and at the same time to stimulate and excite it ever more and more, for that is the proper effect of the heavenly drink which Jesus bestows upon us in His Holy Eucharist; it quenches and cools our thirst for earthly pleasures and joys, but it increases our thirst for the things of heaven and God; and the soul which has once satisfied its thirst, and drunk deep of the chalice of salvation, desires to drink again, nay, longs to drink for ever.

Alas! weak as we are, exposed every day to trial and pain, called to endure so many sorrows, to fight so many battles, we have great need of this heavenly wine, to strengthen our weary hearts and revive our sinking courage, we have great need that the blood of Him who hath overcome the world, should flow into our veins to enable us also to conquer it by Him, and through Him, to resist the violence of our passions, and the unceasing attacks and artful wiles of the enemy of our souls.

We need it greatly also in the time of suffering and trial. Let us drink of this sacred cup when our souls are sinking with grief, when they are oppressed with a heavy load of insufferable anguish, when they are wrung and agonized by sorrow.

The blood of Jesus is healing balm to the heart of the mourner, refreshing dew to the wounded and broken heart, it is a salutary bath to strengthen and refresh the weary soul, a reviving cordial which causes a fount of joy and gladness to spring up amid the barren sands and dreary wastes of life.

Come and drink of the Cup which your Lord has mingled for you, O pure souls, whom grace has preserved hitherto from the contagion of vice and from the defilement of sin. Jesus loves to blend the purple of His Precious Blood with the white lilies of your innocence, it makes their purity appear more dazzling still, and He has prepared your souls to receive Him, as the pure gold is prepared to be wrought into the rich vessels of the sanctuary.—And you, poor souls, who were once sinners, but are now sincere penitents, come and drink of the Blood which has redeemed your souls, mingle the tears of your repentance with that precious Blood, which alone can impart to them a cleansing and purifying virtue. Sin has deprived you of your strength and beauty, the whirlwind of passion like a furious tempest has swept over your souls, and left all in ruins behind it, withering the fair flowers of virtue beneath its baleful breath: but be comforted, the Blood of Jesus, like a soft refreshing dew, will descend, and restore their pristine sweetness and beauty. Repentance restores fresh innocence to the soul, and yours which has so long lain barren in the sight of the Lord, or has at most brought forth a few scentless worthless flowers, lifting their pale heads amidst a wilderness of thorns, may yet, by the operation



of His grace, blossom like the fair garden of the Spouse, under the influence of the southern breeze. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits. (Canticles iv. 16.) Let us all without exception drink of the Cup of the Lord; let us inebriate ourselves with His chalice, and when our lips have once tasted of the Blood of the Lamb, let them never open more, save to bless and praise the Lord who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, which is our Strength, and our Hope, and our Life. Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS, FOR THE SIXTH DAY  
OF THE OCTAVE.

Poor, miserable, and covered with wounds, which sin has inflicted upon my soul, I come to Thee, O my Jesus, my Saviour and my God, to Thee whom I have so often offended, and from whom nothing is justly due to me, but rebuke and chastisement. But I know, O Lord, that Thou wilt be my Saviour before Thou art my Judge. The God of the Holy Eucharist does not condemn, He pardons, and the blood which He shed for sinners, cries, not for vengeance, but for mercy.

In that Precious Blood I put my trust, O my Jesus, Thy Blood, which, in the Garden of Olives was shed upon Thy Sacred Body, upon Thy vestments, and even upon the earth beneath Thy Feet.

I beseech Thee to break my hard heart with bitter grief, and to cause mine eyes to shed tears of sincere repentance. Alas, O Lord, the sins which I commit so easily, so carelessly, have cost Thee very dear. Thou didst bear them with shame and confusion in the Presence of Thy Father, Thou didst weep for them tears of Blood, and I commit them so lightly, so shamelessly, and when I have committed them, my heart grieves so little, with such a superficial sorrow ! Suffer, O my Saviour, one drop of that adorable Blood which Thou didst shed so abundantly in the Garden of Gethsemane to fall upon my hard, ungrateful heart ; to soften that heart of stone, and to fill it with the most lively and intense hatred and horror of sin, which is the only real evil to be avoided and dreaded, because it is the only thing which can bring down upon me the wrath of God, and separate me eternally from Thee.

I detest and hate the sins which wounded Thy Heart, O my Jesus—sin, which was the bitter source of all Thy woes, and the more I hate it, the more do I feel the misery of my own soul, which is stained and defiled with ten thousand crimes which render it displeasing in Thy sight ; and the more deeply do I perceive the enormous magnitude of the debt to Thy Father's Justice which I have contracted : but that tremendous debt, Thou hast paid it for me, O my Jesus, Thy Blood demands not vengeance, but mercy for those who have shed it, and for whom it was poured out.

Suffer me, O Lord, to join my feeble voice to that most powerful call, and in union with it let me implore grace and mercy ; and this not for

myself alone, but for multitudes of sinners who still despise and trample under foot that Precious Blood which was shed for them—who still resist the call of Thy grace, which entreats them to seek for pardon and for life at the foot of the Cross, and in the shade of the tabernacle.

Have pity upon me and upon them also, O my Jesus. I ask it for the sake of that adorable Blood which Thou didst shed so freely in Thy Flagellation. I ask it in the name of the Blood which covered Thy Sacred Face when Thou wast crowned with thorns, in the name of the Blood which started from Thy Feet and Hands when the nails were driven in which attached them to the Cross; have pity upon us, O Lord, by that Blood which flowed from Thy Sacred Heart, when it was pierced after Thy death, by the lance of the Roman soldier; by that Blood which flows daily upon Thine altar, to implore forgiveness for us sinners.

We have indeed sinned, O my God, with all our bodily senses, with all the powers of our souls, with all the affections of our hearts; iniquity has abounded in us, but though the abyss of our sins demands a fearful retribution from Thy Justice, yet remember that in the day of Thy Passion, Thou didst cast into that abyss the Blood from Thy Sacred Head to make expiation for the sins of our mind, our numerous guilty thoughts and desires; the Blood from Thy Sacred Hands and Feet to make expiation for our guilty actions and the steps which we have taken in the ways of sin; the Blood from Thy Sacred Heart, to cleanse our souls from the illicit affections and worldly desires which have stained them, and utterly deprived

them of innocence and purity. Yes, Lord, we confess our guilt, our great guilt, we are unworthy of Thy love and mercy, and yet we hope for it, we implore it with firm confidence and trust, because Thou hast obtained it for us from Thy Father, in exchange for a gift which in His eyes far outweighs not only our iniquities, but the sins of the whole world; and because we implore forgiveness in the name of that Precious Blood which is our only hope, and which was shed for the sake of us poor sinners.

Oh, then, be for ever adored and blessed, most adorable Blood of our Redeemer, the foundation of our hope, our strength, and our joy; but to the reverential homage of our adoration, O my Jesus, suffer us to add our humble reparation for all the insults and profanations which were heaped upon Thy Precious Blood in the day of Thy Passion, and which are still renewed so frequently in the Sacrament of Thy Love. Pardon, O my Jesus, for the souls who still venture to approach Thee, stained and defiled with sin, and to mingle Thy adorable Blood with the foul mire of their iniquities. Suffer us, O my Saviour, to address for them this prayer to Thy Divine Majesty, the prayer which Thou didst address to Thy Father in Thine Agony for those who nailed Thee to the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Accept, O Lord, as some trifling compensation, our sorrow and our tears; let our love be a drop of balm laid upon the Wound in Thy Sacred Heart, and may the voice of Thy Blood, thus shamefully profaned, still call for grace and

mercy upon the heads of its profaners, who inflict such cruel wounds upon Thy Sacred Heart.

Suffer us not, O Lord, to be numbered amongst the profaners of Thy Precious Blood. Let us never be so wretched as to receive unworthily the blessed price of our redemption. Ah! if in Thy divine prescience Thou foreseest, O my Jesus, that I shall ever become guilty of a crime so odious, arrest, before that day arrives, the pulsation of my heart, and may it grow cold in death before it ceases to adore and love Thee. But rather, O sweet Jesus, transform my soul into a living chalice, ever prepared to receive Thee, adorned with the pure gold of charity, and the precious pearls of purity and innocence, that I may never approach Thy altar to drink my own condemnation, but rather to receive my full justification and salvation.

O Most Precious Blood of Jesus, adorable Blood which was shed for me, and is really present upon this altar, Divine and sumptuous chalice, for which my soul thirsts ardently, and feeds upon as the new-born infant lives by its mother's milk, be Thou my daily nourishment, my continual support, be my strength in combat, my support in trial, my consolation in sorrow, my courage when the enemy attacks me. Be Thou the Physician of my soul, heal its sickness, support its weakness, revive its faintness; be Thou my hope in the time of my mortal life, and in death my salvation and my eternal victory.

O Mary, most pure Virgin, sacred fountain, from whence were drawn the very first drops of that Precious Blood which my Saviour shed for

me; Thou who didst follow the Victim of our Salvation even to the place of sacrifice, and didst there adore so sorrowfully that Divine Blood, so shamefully outraged and profaned, offer, I pray thee, sweet Mary, offer to Jesus now, the reparation which thy saintly maternal Heart offered to Him in that mournful day. Offer to Him also the burning love, the transports of adoring gratitude, which issued from the chalice of thy heart, when, after thy Son's ascension, the Precious Blood of our Redemption returned to its first source, when it entered thy pure soul in holy Communion. Behold the weakness and indigence of thy child, and may the fervour of thine act of thanksgiving make amends to God for the coldness of mine. And may thy powerful intercession obtain for me this crowning grace, that the merits of the Adorable Blood of Jesus, thy dear Son, may be applied to my soul, now and *at the hour of my death.* Amen.

## SEVENTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

## THE WOUND OF THE SACRED HEART.

"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."—St. John xix. 24.

I.—*The opening of the Sacred Heart, and Its first worshipper.*

The last sighs of Jesus opened the gates of heaven, which the sin of Adam had closed to himself and his posterity. The justice of God was fully satisfied by that perfect offering for sin; it blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. (Col. ii. 14.) And the mercy of God made haste to remove all those obstacles which prevented the poor exiles of earth from entering their heavenly home. But another heaven was now to open to regenerated humanity, and this heaven was none other than the Heart of the Redeemer Himself. It was opened that every one of His redeemed might enter in, and find in it the knowledge, love, and possession of God Himself. This Sacred Heart was the new Eden in which the Church was born during the death-sleep of the second Adam: it was first opened to give her egress, but it also remains open to be her asylum in the day of trial and sorrow, her fortress and defence in danger, her resting-place after conflict;

there she receives strength and courage to wage fresh warfare against the enemies of her salvation. That Sacred Heart was opened because, as children of the Church, we were all enclosed in it with her ; it was never more to be closed, that we might always return to it as securely and joyfully as a weary child lies down in its cradle, or springs to its mother's arms, and lays its head upon her bosom.

That Adorable Heart was opened because it is the Temple of the Divinity, the Holy of Holies, into which we are to come as kings and priests, to offer to the Most High in His all-prevailing Name a sacrifice worthy of His sovereign Majesty. It is in fact that mysterious book sealed with seven seals, which the sword of the Roman soldier must needs open before we could read in its sacred pages those wondrous secrets of mercy which love had written there.

Love had long before wounded that Sacred Heart ; love had opened It ; love had given It to us : but before we could enter into full possession of our heavenly treasure, it was needful that the covering should be broken ; it was needful that it should be torn and pierced and transfixd by the iron lance, that so the few last drops of Blood which it contained should come to us, should flow upon us, and that, having already given us His life, Jesus should now also bestow upon us His Sacred Heart.

But this piercing of the Heart of Jesus reveals to us also another mystery of love. The whole human race was covered with wounds, disfigured and stained by sin. The Holy Spirit made known



this truth by the mouth of the prophet in these fearful words : " The wound of Samaria is desperate ; it is come even unto Juda, and to the gates of My people ; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint ; from the crown of the head even unto the soles of the feet there is no soundness in them, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isaias i. 6.) But this fearful leprosy, which extended to the whole human race, and seemed to be perfectly incurable, this disease was not too great for the power of God to heal, it was not so loathsome as to turn away the love and infinite mercy of our adorable Saviour. Already were the Feet and Hands of our sweet Jesus pierced, already had the cleansing dew of His most Precious Blood flowed from them upon the sick and polluted souls of sinners, already was His adorable Head surrounded and pierced with thorns, to rebuke and to atone for our pride of intellect and will ; already had His most pure and innocent Body suffered under the blows of the cruel scourges of the public executioners, to heal most surely the sensuality and fleshly lusts of men. But it was the *heart* of man which was the seat of all his uncleanness, the source of that foul leprosy which spread from thence over his whole nature and being ; and therefore did Jesus subject His Sacred Heart to all the agony of Gethsemane, to the fearful sufferings of Calvary, caused by the abandonment and desolation which He then endured, and when that awful cry, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" was wrung from His Heart in its extremest agony, it was because He willed to expiate by His own grief the

guilty joys of sinful man, and to destroy the evil at its very root, by giving us a share in the sorrows of His divine contrition.

And at this day He still opens to us His Heart, once stilled in death, but now the living refuge, where the *sinner healed* may find new life and strength to save him from ever again falling into sin. It is the heavenly hospital, where every infirmity, and pain and suffering which besets the human race may be brought for healing and comfort and strength.

Ah, how good He is, our sweet Jesus! how admirable are these ever-new inventions of His love! We call Him our Saviour, our Friend and our Brother, but He is more than all of these: there is a name which suits Him better, because it expresses still more tenderness, we will call Him our Mother. Yes, Jesus is our mother, because He feeds us with His Flesh and Blood, because He not only presses us closely to His bosom, as a mother caresses her beloved child, but He even opens to us His adorable Heart to receive us, and hides and shelters us in Himself.

## II.

The Sacred Head of our Redeemer is now bent in death, His eyes are closed and dim, His lips pale and mute, His ears no longer hear the blasphemy and reviling of His enemies, a livid paleness overspreads His frame, and His limbs, which were but now convulsed with pain, and writhing in the last fearful agonies of death, are now stiff-

ened, cold, and Oh, so fearfully still! The wounds inflicted by the nails upon His Adorable Feet and Hands, are so enlarged by the weight of His body, as it hung by them upon the cross, that they are still gaping wide, but pale and livid, exhausted of their blood. And the Heart which ever beat for us so tenderly, now beats no more; and the sufferings endured by the Victim of our Salvation are consummated.

Wearied with fatigue and grief, the Queen of martyrs, not standing now, but sitting opposite the altar of the cross, contemplates, in a silent ecstasy of sorrow, the bloody and inanimate body of her Son and her God. All suffering for the Son was over now, but the sad tragedy of the Passion was still acting in the bosom of the Mother; her eyes still fixed on Jesus, her soul was completely plunged and drowned in a bitter sea of agony and grief.

An awful void had suddenly encompassed her; all earthly joy, all attachment to life had vanished with her Son's last sigh. The world was nothing to her now but some vast desert; a solitary wilderness, where no sweet flowers flourished to break the dreary stretch of treeless waste; all around her was withered, discoloured, blighted; a dull grey mist covered the face of the earth, the very air, the breath of life seemed to fail her, now that He who was her Son was covered with the shades of death, now that the heart which was her life had ceased to beat.

Oh, who can comprehend the Virgin Mother's grief! Who can form the least idea of the immense desolation felt by her maternal heart, as

she contemplated that cross where hung in death her Son and her God?

O my God, what is this new mystery? Jesus is dead, but Mary still lives! Was He not her life, her joy, her treasure? Why then did not the same blow which struck the Son strike the mother also? Why were not these existences which life had so closely blended extinguished at the same moment? Oh, I comprehend it now, O Lord; the new-born Church, deprived of her heavenly Spouse, needed help and support: Mary must be its aid, and the Mother's hand must guide its childhood's tottering steps, as she had before guided the footsteps of the Infant God.

### III.

Mary was ready to receive the Spouse of Christ at her first entrance upon life, but even from this cause a fresh sorrow was to arise, and pierce her soul anew with that sword of suffering, which for thirty-three years had hung suspended over her head. Oh! how bitter it is in time of sorrow to call to remembrance the joys for ever past! As she contemplated that Cross upon which the inanimate Body of her Son was suspended, who can doubt that visions of vanished joys rose in rapid succession before her mind. She saw, again, the humble room at Nazareth, where the Word had first assumed in her womb the mortal flesh, and commenced that human life which He had now quenched in death upon the accursed Tree. She heard, again, the Voice of that celestial Mes-

senger, who first hailed her Mother of God, and announced the coming splendours of the eternal reign of the Son of David, whose first throne was to be the Cross. She saw once more the stable of Bethlehem, where she first enjoyed the raptures of maternity; where all trembling in new found happiness, she had pressed her first kiss upon the lips of the Infant God. And the burning land of Egypt, where she had guided His tottering steps: where, though poor and exiled, she had enjoyed days of rare and exquisite happiness, in peaceful retirement with her Heavenly Child; though over all that pure felicity, the shadow of the Cross hung menacing, the only cloud in the bright pure sky of love. And now she beheld Him, the Child whom she had loved so tenderly, the Man whom she still regarded with intense, overpowering love, He was there, the Jesus of Bethlehem, of Egypt, of Nazareth, but to the broken heart of His Mother He was but a crucifix, and a bundle of myrrh. She saw in one glance as it were, on the one hand, the lovely child, instinct with life, radiant in un-earthly beauty, whom she watched and cared for so tenderly, so unceasingly; on the other, she saw the pale dead Son, so horribly tortured and disfigured by the brutal cruelty of men; whose wounds she had not been permitted to bind up, whose burning thirst she had not been suffered to assuage. That Head, encircled with its cruel thorny diadem, and now bent and drooping in the cold silence of death, how often in His radiant childhood had she pressed it to her heart, and rocked it tenderly to sleep upon her loving bosom!

Those eyes now sunk and glazed in death, how

often had their bright soft smile filled her maternal soul with joy unspeakable ! Ah ! does not the remembrance of past happiness, of happiness departed for evermore, render the present misery which oppresses our souls, which pours in upon them an overwhelming flood of agonizing, insufferable grief ; does it not render the sorrow which we feel when our best-beloved lies cold and still before us, stricken by inevitable death, ten thousand times more bitter and unendurable ? We strive to dream it again, that life of the past, we strive to recall it to our souls, to dwell upon it, till it becomes reality, but it flies, it escapes our grasp, and leaves us far, far more desolate, more hopelessly alone than before.

And our holy mother must have felt this agony, as we, alas, feel it still, but she must have felt it still more bitterly, for if her heart had greater capacity for loving than ours, as was doubtless the case, it must also have possessed greater capacity for suffering, and the measure of her love was the measure of her agony also. She passed through all the phases of sorrow, because she had known all the ecstasies of love, and her martyrdom was the more agonizing because Jesus was the instrument of her torture, and because that Divine Love which rendered the sufferings of other martyrs more endurable, was Mary's inexorable executioner.

The crowd had now deserted the holy mountain ; the numerous spectators of that great drama which had but now been consummated had all retired ; some still bearing in their remorseless hearts the fire of hatred, which even the Blood of

the Divine Victim, immolated to their fury, had not yet allayed ; others striking their hearts in contrite sorrow and shame, and entreating the forgiveness of the Messias King, whose Blood but a few hours before, they were loudly demanding with furious cries of rage. There only remained the little group of holy women upon the hill of Calvary, who stood with the Beloved Disciple, around the holy Mother of God, not venturing to intrude upon her speechless grief, but silently mingling their tears with hers. But all at once the noise of trampling footsteps and loud clamouring voices is heard, and a troop of Roman soldiers again disturb the solemn stillness of Calvary. A long shudder passes over Mary's frame. She rises and resumes her place at the foot of the Cross, as still protecting with her maternal love that sacred Body, to which the Divinity has never ceased to be united, and for which she fears, not indeed new sufferings, they are for ever past, but at least fresh insult and outrage.

The soldiers who are sent thither by Pontius Pilate, approach the thieves in whom life still lingers, break their legs, and inflict upon them the mortal sword stroke which puts an end to their sufferings. Mary shudders at their cries, her broken heart is still compassionate to them in their agony ; she weeps over the sad fate of the impenitent thief, whose hardened soul was not affected by the sight of her tears, and who has gone from the temporary pain of crucifixion to the eternal agonies of hell. But how the poor Mother trembles at the thought, that the same cruel treatment will be inflicted upon her Son, how piteously

she looks at those hard rough soldiers as they approach the Cross of her Jesus, to ascertain His death. Fear not, poor Mother, the words of the Scripture must be accomplished. "A bone of Him shall not be broken." But, alas ! shall those other words of equal import, "They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced," also receive their due accomplishment ?

When the Roman soldiers had ascertained beyond a doubt that Jesus was really dead, they were about to retire, when one of them, moved, doubtless, by a divine inspiration, returned, and once more riding up to our Saviour's Cross, he took his long lance and buried it with all his strength in Jesus' sacred side. Then drawing it forth, the adorable Heart of the Incarnate God was plainly seen through the gash in His side, opened by a wide deep wound, from which flowed a stream of water and blood. Mary fell on her knees, and the last drops of the Blood of her beloved Son were sprinkled upon her clothes and upon her hands ; it seemed that the dead Jesus thus bestowed the last and most precious drops of His Blood upon His beloved Mother, as the last and tenderest pledges of His love. He gave them to her that she might bestow them in turn upon the world of sinners, and as a true Mother of Mercy apply their infinite merits to the poorest and most miserable amongst her children.

But this fifth wound, which could cause no pain or suffering to the cold still Heart of Jesus, has inflicted woe unspeakable upon that of Mary. The sword which Simeon had foretold, entered deep into her soul, when the lance of Longinus



pierced the side of her beloved Son. Even an angel's tongue could not describe the intense immeasurable anguish which filled the heart of the Queen of Martyrs, when through His pierced side she beheld that Heart transpierced and open, which had been ever open to her, and in which during thirty-three years, she had never ceased to read the secrets of the infinite love and mercy of the Incarnate God. Ah, at that terrible moment the soul of the first and only worthy worshipper of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was indeed an ocean of sorrow, where every kind of suffering which it is possible for human nature to endure, rushed like a torrent of bitter waters through her soul; but it was also like an ocean of love, the burning waves of which tended incessantly towards that centre of Divine Love, as if to render back the sacred fire to the source from whence it was derived. Lost in that abyss of mute adoring sorrow, Mary's soul was opened to perceive this new and most sublime mystery of the eternal charity of God. Her soul was flooded with prophetic light, and rapt in ecstatic vision she beheld the Church issuing from her earliest cradle, the Heart of her Spouse and King; she embraced the infant Church as it issued forth empurpled with the blood of our redemption, she promised to surround its steps with that protecting love which she still accords to it from her throne of joy above. And then Mary was the first to enter with deep adoring love into that sacred refuge which is opened to us by the mercy of God; she entered it, not alone to hide her grief, but to lead the way for us, to remain there evermore, to be, as it were, the gate of the

Sacred Heart, that through the heart of the Mother, we may reach the heart of the Son, and that when we reach the Son's loving Heart, and take refuge there, we may repose in the Mother's heart also.

#### IV.—*The Oasis in the Desert.*

We are no longer at the foot of that blood-stained cross, where Mary was adoring the inanimate body of her Son. The cross, indeed, still surmounts our altars, but it is no longer a cross of shame and ignominy, it is exalted in triumph amongst the nations; its glory is known throughout the whole world, and the kings and peoples of the earth, whom its might has overcome, surround it with praise and benediction, and repose in peace under its protecting shade; and on this day in particular, even the crucifix is replaced upon this altar by the radiant monstrance which contains the most Holy Eucharist, and crowds press around that altar to adore the Heart of God who was nailed to the cross of Golgotha, the Heart which was pierced by the Roman soldier's lance, which still preserves that open wound of love, but which is no longer bleeding, inanimate, cold and stiff in death, but radiant, glorious, filled with immortal life, and burning with eternal love.

This Sacred Heart of our Redeemer, which is seen by angels ever shining in His bosom with resplendent brightness, far surpassing that of the sun when he shineth in his strength; this Heart to which the angels ever turn to contemplate the wondrous treasures of its mercy and its love, which

create in them unceasing ecstasies of unspeakable joy; this Heart, the joy of angels, is our joy also, it is our possession, it is in the midst of us, and our faith instructs us that the same God who is the joy and delight of angelic choirs, and ransomed souls in heaven, vouchsafes to grant us upon earth some foretaste of eternal happiness, and to brighten the trials of our weary life, and the length of our sad exile, by the sweetness of His Divine Presence.

Yes, Jesus has given us His Heart, we possess it in the adorable Eucharist, the very same Heart which once overflowed with grief and sorrow in Gethsemani and Golgotha, but which is now resplendent with the joys of heaven.

He returns and dwells amongst us, not to drink anew at the fountain of our griefs, but to aid us to endure our sorrows, to be our refuge and abiding place, a sure defence in the time of trial, the Rock of our salvation, the Well-spring in the dry and weary desert of our lives. Wounds which are inflicted after death can heal no more; and Jesus, after His resurrection, suffered His wounds to remain open, to remind us in their mute but eloquent language, that although He has exchanged His mortal life for an immortal and glorious existence, yet the feelings of His Heart are unaltered still; that His Heart can never more be closed to us, that we can enter there when we will, that it is our own, that we may obtain every grace and blessing which we need in that sacred fount of eternal love.

The Heart of the God of the Holy Eucharist is indeed the same Heart as that of Jesus, who was

so kind and gentle in the days of His mortal life ; as then He pities our sorrows, tenderly wipes away our tears, receives our petitions, and mercifully hears the voice of the repentant sinner. He is kind and loving as ever, He is pitiful, tender, eagerly desirous for our salvation, just as when He dwelt in Judea, and paced the hills and vales of Galilee. Now, as then, He loves to be surrounded by the poor, miserable, and afflicted ; for the treasures of His mercy are inexhaustible, and for every human ill His divine hands hold a remedy and a consolation.

Often does the poor traveller on earth find the days of his exile very long and very weary ; and the desert which he must cross, ere he can reach his eternal home, is sometimes so barren, so dry, so deprived of shade and verdure ; the way worn traveller is so footsore and overpowered with fatigue, so sick at heart with sorrow and disappointment, so tormented with that thirst for happiness, which is unquenchable upon earth, that he is ready to sink with weariness and sad oppressed discouragement, he sits weeping beside the dusty road of life, and in his heart he desires to see the sun which dimly enlightens his day of trial upon earth, sink more rapidly in the heavens towards the horizon of his eternity. But, take courage ye weary ones, worn with sadness, parched with thirst ; listen, a voice comes from the midst of the solitude which surrounds your souls, it says, " Come unto Me all ye who labour and are weary, and I will refresh you." And again, " Whosoever thirsts, let him come unto Me, and drink." This is not the voice of the angel who consoled Agar in the desert of

Beersaba, showing her the fountain of fresh water, wherewith she revived the life of her child. This voice is sweeter and more consoling than the voice of an angel; it is the voice of your Saviour and your King. Arise and turn towards the altar, there, quite close to you is His Sacred Heart. It is the oasis in the desert, which He has prepared for the weary pilgrims of life. There will you find the tree of life to shade you from the burning sun, there the fountain of living waters to quench your thirst, and refresh you on your weary way. There is the refuge, the place of repose, the city of peace, the true Melchisedec.

## V.

Ah, how sweet is that resting-place, that refuge which the love of our Jesus has prepared for us. How delightful is that oasis which He has placed in the way of the poor traveller through life; happy is he who reposes there, far happier he who never leaves it more; what can he want more than this? does he not possess the fount of every good? Are not these the well-springs of grace, life, and immortality, and may he not drink freely at those life-giving wells? "O Lord," St. Gertrude cried, "I find in Thy Sacred Heart such great abundance of all good, that I have nothing more to desire, and I can obtain no rest or comfort out of Thy adorable Heart!" All the saints, in every age, have said the same; and the adorable Heart of Jesus was their resting-place and their school, in which they learned those sublime lessons of

devotedness and love which made them the heroes and the saints which they actually were, while in that Sacred Heart they also found the treasure which enriched their souls with those heroic virtues of purity, humility, and love of poverty and the cross, for which they are so admirable and so worthy of our imitation.

St. Francis of Sales used to exhort the souls whom he directed in the path of perfection, to choose a retreat for themselves every day, either upon the summit of Calvary, or else in one of the wounds of our Blessed Lord. Let us follow his advice, and choose our retreat to-day in the Sacred Heart; let us prefer it to every other refuge, let us dwell in it, and quit it never more. Let us listen to our Saviour's voice; it seems that I can hear Him speaking from that altar, and repeating the words of the spouse to her beloved one, in the Canticles: "Arise, my dove, and come to take refuge in the holes of the rocks." (Cant. ii. 14.) And let us answer Him in the words of the prophet-king, "Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly away and be at rest!" (Psalm xliv. 7.) The two wings of the dove are desire and love; let us entreat Jesus to give us both these wings, that we may fly up to His Heart and find rest and refuge there.

But if our souls have long wandered far from God; if, like the timid dove, they have been wounded by the darts of the archer; if they have hardly escaped the cruel talons of the bird of prey which would fain have devoured them; if, feeble, languishing, exhausted, they have no longer any strength left to fly to Jesus, let us in that case

imitate the plaintive murmuring of the turtle dove, let us strive to approach Him, let us entreat Him to take pity upon our wretchedness, and our Blessed Saviour, in His great mercy, will bend down towards us, He will take up the poor wounded dove in His hand, and hide it in the safe covert of His Heart.

The world is full of snares, in which innocence is continually entrapped; it hides the poisoned cup of voluptuous pleasure under flowers, and when its victims are taken and deceived, it mocks them scornfully, and laughs at their repentance and their tears. The world never stoops to raise those victims up, whom it has cast into the foul mire of vice and sin, it insults those whom it has defiled, and spurns under foot the faded flower which it tore rudely from its parent stem. But it is not thus with Jesus, He bends low to raise the bruised reed, He revives with the cooling dew of His grace the flower which has been well nigh broken by the driving wind and rushing storm; He binds up the wounds of the fair dove which the archer has struck with his cruel darts, He shelters her in His bosom, and hides her in His Heart, and in that mystic refuge she is safe as in the holes of the rock, she has nought to fear from the snares of the enemy, or from the fury of the tempest. Or, to speak more plainly, and without any figurative expressions, Jesus is the only friend who never fails the poor victims of the world and sin, He is the only friend who stretches out a hand to raise them up and to dry their tears; the only one who despises not the repentant sinner,

but receives him with tender, unfailing kindness and affection.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is not only the refuge for repentant sinners, but it is also the safe resting-place of innocence; it is that Divine Rock, on which the faithful soul, like a pure white dove, may build her nest. It is the sweet retreat in which the soul, truly impressed with the nothingness of this world, retires and fixes its abode. There the faithful soul enjoys celestial happiness, there she is transported with love, and exclaims in ecstasies of joy, "Lord, it is good for me to be here, suffer me here to set up my tent, to fix my abode for ever." Oh, it is indeed good to be with Jesus, it is good, above all, to be in His Sacred Heart.

The soul which takes refuge there, is like the dove which Noe sent out of the ark after the deluge; it finds no place of rest upon the earth, and makes speed to return to its beloved abode. For that soul can find no happiness elsewhere; in all other places she experiences an utter void and weariness; all human pleasures seem tasteless and insipid, and she prefers the thorns of Jesus' crown, the Wound in His breast, and the cross by which it is surmounted, and which often transfixes her own, to every joy which can be tasted afar from Him. For love is the balm which softens every grief, and to suffer for Him whom she loves, is to her the sweetest happiness.

And let us also take the wings of a dove, let us fly from earth, ascending to the Heart of Jesus; let that be ever our dearest refuge: in Him we shall find strength for weakness, courage in time



of danger, light in darkness and doubt, comfort in sorrow, and a sweet safe refuge in the hour of death.

Let us, then, dwell there unto our life's latest hour : and when our heart shall cease to beat, let it still be found reposing upon the Sacred Heart which was its constant support in life, and let our soul never leave that sweet retreat until it exchanges it for the everlasting abode of eternal peace above, the eternal rest of heaven. Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE  
SEVENTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord, the God of Hosts ! Away from Thee my soul languishes, O Lord, it withers, it dies ; but Thy altars, O God of strength, shall be my refuge and the place of my repose, and my heart and my soul rejoice in the Lord, even in the Living God. As the prophets in former days were filled with love and joy in remembering the ancient tabernacle, so do I feel, O my God, that their words appear to me tame and passionless in presence of this altar, the dwelling-place of the Hidden God. Here I see no figures, no shadows of the truth, but the heavens have bowed down, and the earth has brought forth righteousness, and I meet with my God even in the land of my exile ; He it is whom I adore upon that altar ; He it is with whom I converse as a friend speaketh with his friend. It is the Heart of my Saviour which I behold by faith really present in the Holy Eucha-

rist, ever burning with the same love with which it was animated in the days of His mortal life.

What seek I any longer upon earth? What have I to desire even in heaven itself, since I find Thee here, O my Lord, who art at once its glory and its joy? I need not now ascend to heaven to find Thee, O my Lord, Thy temple is open, Thou awaitest me there, both by night and by day, and I am permitted at any hour to adore Thee there, and to rejoice in Thy divine presence, to shed my tears in Thy bosom, and to lay the burden of all my griefs on Thee.

O how wonderful, O Lord, are the inventions of Thy love! Thou dost not only demand my heart, Thou art not even satisfied by converting it into Thy tabernacle when Thou dost descend into it in Holy Communion; but Thou dost also give me Thine; Thou dost invite me to repose therein; Thou wilt dwell in Thee, even as Thou dost abide in Thy Father. Thou callest me to come to Thee, to live in Thee, to be with Thee where Thou art, in time, that I may hereafter dwell with Thee in a blessed eternity. What matters it then, O Lord, if here below I endure poverty, humiliation, and suffering, provided that I am with Thee? What matters it if I am compelled to share largely in the heritage of Thy Cross, if my whole life wears away in sorrow and tears, so long as my tears are shed in the refuge of Thy Heart, and dried by Thy merciful Hand, and that hereafter Thy mercy shall receive me to joy eternal and unspeakable?

A tender mother carries her beloved child in her arms, she presses him to her heart, but Thy

love and mercy, O my Saviour, surpass the tenderness of the most devoted mother in the world. It was not enough for Thee to bear us in Thine arms, those sacred arms which Thou didst open wide to receive us upon the tree of the cross ; it was not enough for Thee to shelter us upon Thy Heart, when it was cold and still in death ; nothing could satisfy Thy love, O my Jesus, save to open a refuge for us in Thy Sacred Side, a refuge which is ever open, and ready to receive each one of Thy children.

In the days of Thy mortal life, O my Jesus, Thou saidst to Thy disciples : " Seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened ; ask, and ye shall receive." But now, O Lord, what need we seek for ? Has not the lance of the Roman soldier displayed to us that treasure which alone is able to supply all our needs ; the Fountain of Living Waters which alone can slake our thirst ? Has it not discovered for us the Divine Oasis where we may henceforth peacefully repose ; where we need fear no more the burning heat of the day, nor the fury of the tempest ? What need have we to knock, since the sanctuary which we would reach is ever open, for love has broken all its doors, and nothing, not even our innumerable sins and acts of ingratitude, can ever close them more. And why should we ask, when the riches of the treasures of God's mercy and love are ever open to us, and we can take what we will and when we will ?

O blessed for ever be Thy mercy, O my Saviour, which has opened such a refuge as this to us poor children of earth ! May all their voices

join with mine to praise and bless Thee, O my God ; and may all hearts unite in the song of gratitude and praise !

Thy Heart, O my God, is the place of my repose ; there will I dwell for ever. Too long has my soul, O Lord, sought to slake its thirst at the muddy fountains of earth, too long has my heart endeavoured to supply that void with earthly love, which Thou alone canst fill ; too long have I been led away by the deceitful voice of worldly passions, but now I will listen to Thy voice alone, the Voice which can never deceive, which alone can give me peace. Near Thy Sacred Heart, O my Jesus, I seem to breathe a purer air, my thoughts expand, my mind takes a higher flight, my whole nature is elevated and improved. Thy mercy sustains my weakness, and whilst with one Divine Hand Thou dost remove all the stains of sin which defile my soul, with the other Thou dost invest me with the garment of innocence and justice, clothing me with the robe of Thine own merits, O my God.

What matters it, O my God, that I live unknown, despised, and forgotten by the world, provided that I dwell in Thy Heart, that Thy eye regards me favourably, and that I have a share in Thy love ? For that, O Lord, is my sole desire, the only glory which I hope for in time or in eternity ; all earthly joys fade into nothingness in presence of that celestial happiness ; and from my inmost heart I cry, that one day, one hour, passed in Thy courts, O my God, is better than ten thousand spent in the tents of wickedness.

Yes, most sweet Saviour, since my heart has

enjoyed the happiness of belonging to Thee, of living for Thee, of reposing in the secret of Thy Heart, no other felicity is sufficient for it, and all that is not Thee, or does not lead to Thee, is tasteless and bitter. Without Thee, O my Jesus, pleasure is nought but pain, riches are but poverty, and joy a treacherous *mirage*, a dream which passes away, and leaves the soul dry and parched as the desert sands. But with Thee, Lord, sorrow is turned into joy, poverty becomes riches, and humiliation the truest glory.

Thou hast given us Thy Heart, O my Jesus, and fain would I offer Thee in return the hearts of all men, fain would I see them all influenced with the fire of Thy love. But, alas ! I have but my own, and I feel how poor and unworthy it is to be an offering unto Thee ; but I know Thy mercy, O my Jesus, and poor and wretched as it is, I venture to lay it at Thy feet. It is Thine, O Lord, I give it Thee without reserve, I consecrate it to Thee for ever, all its feelings, desires, affections, are henceforth Thine alone ; watch over it, O my Saviour, preserve it from its own natural inconstancy ; too often, alas ! have I taken it back again after giving it to Thee, but never permit me to do so more ; hide it in Thine own Heart, that it may be Thine in life, in death, in time, and in eternity.

O Mary, Virgin Immaculate, who didst adore the first and last throbs of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, thou who didst contemplate with such tender sorrow and love the wound which was inflicted upon that Adorable Heart, obtain me grace to know and love that loving and most merciful

Heart, to hope in it, to have recourse to it with full and entire confidence in every need. Obtain for me also, grace to imitate its virtues, its patience, sweetness, charity, and purity, to imitate it as closely as it is possible for human weakness to do, so that, having dwelt in that safe retreat during all the days of my earthly life, I may rejoice in it throughout eternity. Amen.

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## EIGHTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

### THE PLEDGE OF IMMORTALITY.

"He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."—St. John vi.

#### I.—*The Grave.*

The sufferings of Jesus were consummated: He had drained the cup of human suffering: pure and innocent Victim, He had submitted to the most terrible of all those chastisements which Divine Justice can inflict upon guilty man: He was made subject unto death, like all the children of Adam. But one more humiliation was now reserved for our Blessed Saviour, it was the tomb. He might have avoided it, if such had been His Divine Will, He might have returned to life immediately after His crucifixion, for His was a voluntary submission to death, which could not venture to strike

Him until He gave commandment ; and even in that hour when He submitted to the sway of that dread messenger which must come to all, the king of terrors had no power over Jesus, save what he derived from His own sovereign command and Will. But as Jesus had never turned away from the scourges of the Prætorium, or the shame and ignominy of the Cross, so would He not recoil from this last and greatest humiliation. He willed to soften the horrors of death to us by submitting to them in His own Sacred Person ; to take away our natural fear of the grave, by first descending into it Himself, blessing the graves of the saints in which His own Flesh had lain, and showing His dying members the way to follow their dying Head.

Man, having been originally created for immortality, cannot contemplate the destruction of any part of his nature or being, without a sensation of fear and horror ; he looks fearfully at the earth beneath his feet, when he remembers that his tomb awaits him there, and that sooner or later his ashes must descend to mingle with those of past generations who have preceded him to that last home of all the human race. He thinks with secret terror of the inevitable destruction which awaits his body, which though the inferior part of his nature is too often the most beloved and tenderly cared for. But Jesus came to be the Saviour and the guide of our mortality, and therefore did He willingly consent to undergo that final humiliation, therefore did He enter and enlighten the gloomy kingdom of death, into which each of us must descend in his turn ; and therefore did He

bless with His own Presence that sad hostelry of the grave, to which all the generations of men must shortly come, when the journey of life is ended ; where they must sleep that long sleep of death, which precedes the glorious dawn of endless day.

Jesus was not to remain long in this dark abode, He was only to rest there a few hours, to sleep a short light sleep to sanctify our longer slumbers, and to deposit in the cold bed of earth a germ of immortality. Soon shall He wake and rise, to issue glorious and immortal from the gates of the grave, and to give us a pledge and proof that we too shall rise again, by His own most joyful Resurrection.

Let us then once more transport ourselves in thought to that sacred mountain, and watch the solemn event which is to close the mortal life of our Blessed Saviour ; let us be present in spirit at the interment of a God. Or rather, let us contemplate how He who is Life itself, pursues death into its own dominions, enters the tomb only to strike the fell destroyer a mortal blow, and gives a right to the weakest member of the human race to brave him with impunity, by means of the Cross. Come then, O death, may the humble Christian say. Come death, thou art now the gate of life to me. O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory ?

When the death of Jesus was ascertained beyond a doubt, His disciples prepared to render Him the last sad duties, and Joseph of Arimathea, who had not ventured until now to declare himself openly to be a disciple of the Lord, was



inspired with holy courage, and came forward boldly to demand the Roman governor's permission to take down the Body of Jesus from the cross. Pilate, knowing that he had unjustly condemned the innocent Victim, and being already troubled in mind and conscience by the sense of his crime, granted the required permission without difficulty, and Joseph quickly returned to Calvary, followed by Nicodemus, and bearing linen cloths, perfumes, and all other things necessary for the interment.

Those faithful followers of Jesus approached with deep respect, the Cross on which that pale awful Body still hung, they placed ladders carefully against it, and then, aided by John, the Beloved Disciple, and the converted centurion, they cautiously drew out the nails which had pierced the Saviour's Feet and Hands; they removed His crown of thorns, but gently, as if they were afraid of causing fresh sufferings to their beloved Master; and then they laid those precious relics, still wet with the Blood of Jesus, at His Mother's feet. Then, lifting down His inanimate Body, with the most reverential care, they laid it in the arms of Mary, who was kneeling at the foot of the Cross with outstretched arms, in an ecstasy of sorrow and of love.

But let me not attempt to describe that mournful scene, or the passionate tenderness with which the mother clasped her Son, the Son who had now left her, and gone into a far country, having spent all the goods which she had lavished upon Him in her love. For Jesus was indeed Mary's Prodigal Son. He had left her humble roof, the home

where He lived so peacefully, where all was impregnated with the sweet odour of sanctity, where the fair flowers of virtue exhaled their sweet perfume; He had left her to travel far, far away, to rush into the world of iniquity, lavishing His love, His labours, His Blood, His life, upon ungrateful sinners, who gave Him nought in recompense, save hatred, thorns and nails, the Cross, and death; and now that He had spent all, poured forth all His Blood, and laid down all that mortal life which Mary had bestowed upon Him, He came back to her, naked and spoiled.

But this poor mother was less happy than the father of the prodigal Son, she could not press Him to her heart, and say, "My Son was dead and is alive again, He was lost and is found." She could only bathe His wounds with tears, and cry, "My Son was living and is dead. Oh, all ye who pass by, consider and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

When the same virginal hands which once wrapped the Body of the Infant God in swaddling clothes at Bethlehem, had now enveloped the lifeless Body of the Redeemer in the winding sheet, the sad swaddling clothes of death, His weeping disciples took up that precious burden, and, accompanied by Mary Magdalen and the other holy women, they proceeded to a garden belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, which was but a little way from the place where Jesus was crucified: and taking the Body of our Lord to a grotto in which had been hollowed out a new tomb, hitherto unoccupied, they reverentially laid down the Lord and Giver of Life; then, leaving their hearts where

their Treasure lay, they rolled a great stone to the entrance of the grotto, upon which the Roman soldiers affixed the Imperial Seal ; they then went away weeping, leaving the holy sepulchre to the care of the angels. And the guards whom the Jews had obtained from Pontius Pilate kept watch there also, in order to allay the enmity of the Jews, who feared that the disciples of Jesus would come while all men slept, and steal away His Body, and persuade men that He was risen from the dead.

## II.

Dawn was just breaking upon the morning of the third day, when Christ arose, glorious and full of life, from the tomb where His disciples had laid Him ; eluding the vain prudence and watchfulness of the Jews, and leaving behind Him in the cold, dark grave, all those linen clothes and winding sheets which had enshrouded Him, as trophies of the victory which He had gained over death.

Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more. Jesus could never more lay down that life which He had resumed by His own power. And yet He seems even now to subject Himself to the passing humiliation of the tomb, as He dwells amongst us, still, silent and hidden in the sacrament of His love ; and is there not a most striking analogy between His condition after His death and that in which we now find Him in the Most Holy Eucharist ?

Faith tells us that Jesus in the Eucharist, is

living, immortal, glorified; but He is also in a condition of mystical death. He is still and silent as death, He is covered with the sacred species as if with a winding sheet, and the marble tabernacle in which He rests is indeed a tomb, a tomb where Jesus living, dwells as though He were dead, and makes no use of His senses, any more than in the grave in which He was laid by His disciples.

Jesus is enclosed in the tabernacle just as He once was in His garden sepulchre, and His ministers keep the key. One might almost say that He still remains under the seal of the Roman authority, not indeed under the power of the ancient masters of the world, but under that of the Roman Church, whose peaceful sway has long since replaced the Cæsar's iron rule, and who watches over His new sepulchre, in the persons of her bishops and priests, with all the tender solicitude of a mother hanging over the cradle of her first-born babe. Jesus is alone in the tabernacle, and alone He lay during His short death-sleep. The angels keep watch over Him, and adore in silence, and some few pious souls come singly, like the holy women, to carry to the Lord's new tomb, the mystic perfumes of prayer, adoration, and love.

For the tabernacle is a *new* tomb, none but Jesus has entered there, nor will any enter after Him. He alone could love so well as to endure all the poverty and humiliations of that narrow abode, and even if God gave us ability to do so, who amongst us all would consent to be reduced to that state of voluntary annihilation, of apparent death? Who would do that out of love to his

Creator, which his Creator daily does out of love to His sinful creatures? Alas, not one of us but would shrink from such an act of self-devotion; none but the Heart of the Incarnate God could realize such a mystery of love as this.

Oh! how dear should the tabernacle be to our hearts, the tabernacle which contains our Treasure! How gratefully should we regard that casket of the brightest Jewel in the world! How lovingly should we kneel before that mysterious tomb, where our Jesus sleeps so peacefully, so tranquilly, while His Heart watches over us still! How sweet should be the perfumed incense of prayer which ascends from the censer of our hearts, when we approach the God who is ever ready to listen to our lightest sigh, who even hears the sound of the tears as they trickle down our cheeks! How hard must be the heart that continues cold, insensible in the very presence of the tabernacle! Who would not be melted before this monument of infinite God-like love? What! we are affected to tears when we re-visit the spot where our infant years were passed! We weep when we behold the place our fathers used to occupy in the parental home, the scene of our mother's first caress! We are moved even at the sight of the tree which sheltered our youth, we cling fondly to our home, our native country; yea, even to this earth which contains in its bosom the mortal remains of many loved ones, of many by whom we were beloved; but the tabernacle affects us not! Oh, it must indeed be dead, the heart which is not recalled by its presence to repentance and remorse, which does not throb

with feeling at the remembrance of the God of its childhood, the good God of his First Communion.

But it is far otherwise with the faithful soul; his sweetest thoughts are connected with the tabernacle. To the Christian it is dearer than the birthplace of his infant joys, dearer than his native country, than his paternal home, where the ashes of his fathers sleep: for it is his joy, his hope, his heaven.

Let our hearts then rest there, where our Treasure is, and though the duties of our condition in life do not permit us to remain always at the foot of the altar, let us at least often return thither in thought and in desire; let our souls, which are formed for highest flights, ascend on the wings of love to the abode of our Blessed Lord; let them dwell in secret with Him in the tabernacle; let them fly, yes, fly as fast as Magdalen, to the new tomb of Jesus Christ our Lord. The Angel Guardians of the Sanctuary will not say to us, as once they did to that lover of the Lord, "He is not here." No, but they will say to us, "Come, Jesus is there," He waits for you; embalm His Sacred Body with the precious perfumes of your prayers and love; His Heart has many a rich blessing to bestow in return for your devotion and gratitude.

## III.

But it was not sufficient for Jesus to have blessed, by the repose of only a few hours, the tomb into which we must all one day descend. It is His pleasure to enter into us also, and to deposit within our inmost souls the blessed germ of a glorious immortality. He has decreed that His Flesh, united to our own, should become the pledge of our resurrection to eternal life, and that His Blood, mingling with our own, and flowing through our veins, should become even to our bodies, a seed of immortality, a principle of eternal life. Our soul, being created in the image of God, and inspired with His divine life-giving essence, possesses the instinctive conviction and sentiment of her immortality; she feels intimately that she cannot be destroyed and pass away, that the life which the Creator has bestowed upon her was never meant to be confined to those few years which she is destined to pass on earth, and which we erroneously call life; she feels that the heavenly flame once kindled in her by a spark from the Source and Centre of eternal light, can never more be stifled by the cold hand of death, but must burn on throughout endless ages; and that when the bonds which attach it to the body with which God decreed its temporary union, are unloosed by death, its real existence will not be ended, but rather it will be but just begun, for then only will it enter into possession of the true life, which is life eternal.

Our souls do not, cannot die, this faith and

reason alike assure us: but they may lose the happiness which God created them to enjoy; they may lose that life of grace which is in them the principle and commencement of the life of glory; they may, through sin, fall short of the glorious destiny which awaits them; and though their existence can never be annihilated, yet they may condemn themselves to eternal death, they can lose God for ever, and they can renounce of their own free will the happiness of seeing Him, loving Him, and possessing Him eternally; and therefore Jesus, who knows our weakness and inclination to evil, and who also knows the happiness of that eternal life which is prepared for us, mercifully comes into our souls, to support our weakness, and to strengthen and increase in them that divine life of grace which is the pledge of the eternal life of glory.

But even this is not all. God, who created the heart of man, and against whom, in the day that he first sinned, He pronounced that terrible malediction, saying: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," knows well how fearfully he contemplates the certainty of the dissolution of his mortal body, how eagerly he aspires to immortality, and that not for his soul only, but also for his body, the less noble part of himself. He knows all this, our Jesus, and to calm our fears, to take away our horror of death, He promises to make our bodies also immortal, saying to us: "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (St. John vi. 55.)

It is, then, immortality, immortality both for.



soul and body, that Jesus promises to us; and not only does He promise this, He gives us a pledge and earnest of immortality each time that He gives Himself to us in the most holy Eucharist. Our adorable Saviour deigns to make us live with His life, *live by Him in time*, that we may still live by Him, and by His own life, that is to say, in His glory and happiness, throughout eternity. And the soul which is frequently united to Jesus in Holy Communion, which becomes His temple, His sanctuary, the soul which He sanctifies, and makes divine by His adorable presence; must eternally preserve that life of grace, and Jesus will never suffer it to be lost. And that body also, which so often becomes the living tabernacle of the Word made Flesh, will be *lent, not given*, to death; it will be destroyed, it is true, it will be delivered over to the corruption of the tomb, but it will revive again from its ashes in the resurrection day, it will issue from the grave, living, glorious, and incorruptible. The Lord will look upon those dry bones, and they will revive, He keeps watch over that dust in which His All-seeing Eye still perceives the germ of life, which was deposited there by the God of the most holy Eucharist; His angels guard the remains of that Flesh, sanctified by frequent union with the adorable Flesh of the Lord, and not an atom of it will they suffer to be lost. The course of time may cover that crumbled frame with the dust of centuries, its tomb may be levelled with the earth, and effaced from the memory of man, but Jesus will never forget it, and the day cometh in which His Almighty

Voice will echo even to the depths of that long forgotten tomb, summoning its inmate to arise from his long sleep of death, to be reunited to the soul in whose trials and sacrifices it shared, and in whose eternal happiness it is destined henceforth to partake.

#### IV.

Let us, then, cheer our hearts with confident hope and thankful anticipation, and let us exclaim with grateful joy, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that my eyes shall behold Him upon earth." Yes, our eyes, so long dimmed by an exile's tears, shall unclothe in that hour to the unspeakable brightness of eternal day. Then we shall behold our Jesus, not as now under the eucharistic veils which hide His heavenly beauty from our sight, but in all the splendour of His glory. We shall see Him, not by the pale light of an earthly sun, but in the radiant splendour of eternal brightness; our ears shall hear the sound of His beloved voice, and His hand shall dry the traces of the last tears which we shed on earth, the last tears which shall ever flow from our eyes.

This wondrous happiness is prepared and intended for us, it is not promised only; Jesus gives us a pledge of this blessedness whenever He gives Himself to us in the most Holy Eucharist; He comes, if we may so speak, to sign His promise in His blood, by causing it to circulate in our

veins, and the priest, who gives us the sacred species, reminds us on each occasion of that consoling truth, by the sacred words which he addresses to us, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto eternal life. Amen."

Jesus Christ is the first-born from amongst the dead, and His resurrection is not the pledge alone, but the pattern also of that which ours will be. He will construct our bodies again from dust, glorious and immortal like His own. Our body, which will be laid in the grave, covered with the shades of death, becoming pale, motionless, and cold, still bearing the traces of human sorrow on its livid features, until they are dissolved into corruption and dust—will arise again and issue from the tomb, full of strength, instinct with life, dazzling in beauty, and freed from its original inertness and weight, possessing the agility and subtilty which belongs to the adorable Body of Jesus; and the new life, of which it then becomes the inheritor, will be henceforth impassible to the destructive influence of sorrow, old age, and death. Time will be no more, and the weight of years will no longer exhaust its strength and destroy the vigour of its eternal youth. A superabundance of life will circulate joyously in our veins, and cause our hearts to throb more strongly, and we need no longer fear the sufferings, the infirmities of sickness and old age. Impassible, immortal, like our Divine Head, we may then exclaim with Him, in transports of unutterable joy, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Such is the glorious immortality, the happiness, which is assured to our bodies by participation in

the most Holy Eucharist, such is the resurrection of which it is the pledge, the germ of life which is deposited by the glorified flesh of our Divine Lord in our corruptible and mortal flesh; but if such be the sublime destiny of that prison of clay which retains our soul its captive, which so often arrests and weighs down its loftiest aspirations towards its heavenly country, how great will be the felicity of that soul, which, during its life on earth, has resisted the desires of the flesh, overcome the world, and brought all its senses into subjection, that it might follow more closely in the steps of its Divine Master, and remain more fully devoted to its God? How glorious will be that eternal life, of which Jesus gives us the sure and certain pledge, when He bestows Himself upon us in the sacrament of His love! Oh, how can we describe it, how can we in any degree comprehend that heavenly life, bound up, and darkened as we are, with the overhanging shadow of death?

Oh, doubtless, when that heavenly life begins, the soul will find new faculties developed in her, of whose existence she never dreamed, though the germ of them all was from the first enclosed in her, but never came to perfection, because she did not need them, and could have found no scope for their exercise in the low earthly life of this present existence.

Just as in our childhood the soul appears to sleep within us, and our faculties and intelligence are developed by slow degrees in the course of years, not arriving at their full lustre until we reach maturity; so the soul will not enter into the complete possession of her own powers

and capabilities, until she begins her heavenly existence ; and her present life is to her simply a protracted childhood, during which she is unconscious of the magnificent gifts which the liberality of God has bestowed upon her ; just as an infant in the cradle is unconscious of the faculties which are slumbering within his soul, but which he will exercise with ease and profit when he arrives at maturity. What more can we say then of this life of heaven ? We can say only, that it is the life of God Himself, in which He grants us an increase of participation, and that it will fully satisfy all the needs of our soul, and will quench its double thirst for knowledge and for love, without ever producing satiety or weariness.

Even in the course of our mortal life, we must have sometimes felt the fire of Divine love burning brightly within us. When we have been united heart to heart with Jesus in the chaste embraces of Holy Communion, have we not sometimes felt the cloud which conceals His face become so transparent, that it seemed as if the light of His glory was pouring down in rapid waves, into the very centre of our soul, and the fire of love which consumes His Sacred Heart, communicating itself to ours, and filling us with overpowering happiness ? at such times, a drop out of the ocean of celestial bliss descended into our hearts, and raising us above the world, we seemed already transported to heaven. And yet we were only surrounded by a faint reflection of His glorious light, we had only received one little drop of love, and even that was mixed with suffering, for our inability to love God as we would wish to love

Him, and as He should be loved, *immeasurably*, was one suffering; and the certainty that our present happiness would fade away, like some delightful dream, was another suffering; but in heaven our love will be unmixed with sorrow, our powers and capacities will be unlimited, the course of time will be ended, and in eternity nothing shall pass away, for that word, *For Ever*, doubles the happiness of the eternally happy souls.

Yes, at the moment of our soul's entrance into heaven, God will multiply her powers of loving a hundred fold; He will impart to her a strength, a power of love, of which in our present condition we cannot even form an idea. The soul, being thus glorified, and rendered capable by immutability, of enduring the clear and open view of the Beauty of God, will expand, augment, and falling into an unspeakable ecstasy of delight, will be attracted and drawn to Him by an irresistible impulse of love, which no obstacle will any more prevent from attaining its end, and uniting itself to the Divine object of its desire. Plunged and absorbed in God: loving with transport, though dwelling in peace unspeakable; suffering no distractions from the continual contemplation of His Perfections, and becoming ever more and more deeply absorbed in that unfathomable Ocean of perfection and love, that bottomless Abyss of Truth, that inexhaustible Fountain of delight; loving *immeasurably*, and receiving a return of love which infinitely surpasses everything that it could imagine or conceive; that is heaven, that is Eternal life, that life of inconceivable happiness of which Jesus

presents us with the pledge, when He gives Himself to us, in the Most Holy Eucharist.

This life of eternal blessedness is the life of Jesus, which He promises to give us, which He has purchased for us by His sufferings and death, of which He desires to make us partakers; but it is His will that we should become worthy of it by living His life here on earth, by accomplishing in ourselves the things which were wanting in His Passion; or, in other words, by accepting with resignation those few drops of bitterness which He left at the bottom of His cup of suffering, to put our fidelity and courage to the proof. Let us never forget that it was necessary that Christ should suffer before He entered into His glory, and that we can reach that glory only by treading in His steps, by dying to ourselves, and by generously accomplishing those few light sacrifices which He requires us to make for Him. But let us also remember always, that the Holy Eucharist is the bread which is to sustain our weakness, which will make us strong, generous, constant; that it is by frequently uniting ourselves to Jesus that we shall become inoculated with His Divine life, that we shall be suffered to participate in His spirit and His strength, and that we shall find Him to be not only the pledge of our future happiness, but the guide to lead us thither, and the grace to enable us to merit it. Amen.

CONVERSATION WITH JESUS CHRIST, FOR THE EIGHTH  
DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

I adore Thee, O Jesus, Son of the living God, I believe that Thou art indeed the Resurrection and the life, and that whosoever eateth Thy adorable flesh, and drinketh Thy precious blood, receives in himself a germ of immortality, and a precious pledge of a glorious resurrection. Yes, Lord, I believe all these things, I rest with confidence upon Thy word, I know that my Redeemer liveth, that my own eyes shall behold Him, and this hope which reposes in my heart, has become my strength and my consolation.

O how great is Thy kindness, O my beloved Saviour; Thy love was not satisfied with enduring the most bitter torment, with giving up life itself for our salvation; it was not enough that Thou didst descend even unto the humiliation of the tomb, that Thou mightest take away our horror and fear of that dark abode; it was not enough even that Thou hadst become the companion of our exile, the guide of the weary journey of our lives, the beloved presence which sheds sweetness upon all the sorrows and sufferings of our day of trial here below; all this did not suffice Thee, O my Jesus, but Thou wert also pleased to incorporate us with eternal life, by uniting us to Thyself; Thou didst cause Thy sacred flesh to become, not alone the food of our souls, but also the pledge of the resurrection and immortality of our bodies.

Yes, Thou dost descend into us, Thou dost im-



pregnate us, body and soul, with life and immortality, and Thou dost seem to say to us, "Fear nothing, I have vanquished death, I have triumphed over its power, not for My own sake, for I had nothing to fear from the king of terrors, but for yours."

For your sakes alone I have overcome his power, I have broken his bands, and let the oppressed go free; fear nothing, then, My children, for you My faithful followers, death is now but a sleep, which shall be surely followed by a glorious resurrection. Descend then, without fear, into this bed of the tomb, which your mother, the Church, will bless in My name, for whilst her hand shall plant the cross above your grave as a sign of hope and immortality, your soul set free from mortal bonds shall take its flight to worlds on high, it shall sing with joy at its deliverance, and shall drink abundantly at the fountains of eternal life, whilst it peacefully awaits the resurrection morn.

I comprehend, O Lord, that to the Christian, death is but a sleep. It is the rest which follows upon toil, and the body which has been consecrated to Thee by the waters of baptism, which has been sanctified by Thy sacraments, and so often made divine by Thy Presence in the Most Holy Eucharist, this body will not be for ever given over to the silence and corruption of the tomb. In that body which is now to be reduced to the dust of death, some portion of Thine own life still remains, which will be an abiding germ and principle of life and immortality for all the rest.

And was it not from faith in this sacred truth that Thy martyrs derived their unshaken courage, O my God? that they found strength to bear tortures of the most fearful kinds, and death presented in its most cruel shapes? Strengthened with the Bread of the Strong, inebriated with Thy most Sacred Blood, they had eternal life within them, and therefore they could afford to despise and condemn that mortal life which they laid down gladly for Thy dear sake. They calmly beheld their severed limbs falling one by one beneath the axe of the executioner, they watched their life escaping from their veins in streams of blood, and smiled with peaceful joy, for they knew that the hour of their death would be also the hour of their triumph, and their last sigh the signal for their eternal victory. They well knew, those heroes of faith and love, that Thou wouldst restore to them, O my God, that tortured body which they offered up as a pure sacrifice unto Thee, that Thou wouldst restore it, not as now in weakness and pain, but in power, glory, joy, and immortality.

And was it not their firm faith in this truth which sustained the other heroes of the Church in their long career of humiliation and penance, which enabled them to endure, not only patiently but joyfully, a life so opposed to their natural inclinations, a life of continual mortification, passed in the practice of the austerest penance, which caused them to discover more joy in fasts and disciplines than the worldling finds in his refinements of earthly luxury and pleasure? Yes, it is faith in Thy promises, O my God, it is the

hope of a glorious immortality which sustains those holy penitents, those weak yet heroic virgins, in the midst of perils and trials of every kind; which leads them to fly on wings of devotedness and love to the very ends of the earth, to comfort the sorrowful, to relieve the sick, to supply the necessities of the poor, to confront pestilence, and danger, and death, joyfully exposing their lives for Thy sake, and rejoicing still more when Thou dost accept the sacrifice.

And then, O my God, Thou dost even in this world bestow a species of immortality upon Thy saints, by preserving their mortal remains from the corruption of the tomb, and Thy Church, animated with a like spirit, surrounds those precious relics with peculiar veneration and respect. She is full of maternal love for those sacred bones which were the temples of the Holy Ghost, and Thy living tabernacles; she preserves them as precious treasures, she wraps them in rich coverings, and places them upon Thy altars, O my God, not only to excite the veneration of Thy children, but also their emulation, by reminding them of the virtues, sacrifices and triumphs of the saints.

Why then, O my Jesus, should we fear death, since Thou dost mercifully become our Life, since, in giving Thyself to us, Thou dost imprint upon our souls and bodies the seal of immortality? What then do the pains and miseries of this present life signify, to the soul which is inspired by the hope of a life of eternal happiness? Why should she shed an exile's tears, when she awaits the joys of her eternal home? All transitory

things are nothing; and should be counted for nothing. Sorrow has little effect upon the soul that loves Thee, and lives by Thy Holy Eucharist, O my Jesus, for Thou art her Joy. Poverty affects her not when she possesses Thee, for art Thou not her Treasure and her eternal riches? Sickness and infirmities are disregarded by her, since Thou art her Health and her Strength; the weakness of age is forgotten, for Thou dost renew her youth, and even death cannot harm her, for Thou art her Eternal Life, and death is to her but the end of all her sorrows, and the commencement of eternal happiness.

Ah, when will that day arrive, O my God, that blessed day in which my soul shall break all the bonds which now confine it in its prison of clay, and taking its flight towards Thee, O Lord, shall sing the joyful song of its deliverance? When will it come? that day in which Thy Hand shall wipe away all my tears, and Thy beloved Voice shall summon me to enjoy the sweet repose of my Eternal Home? When shall I be permitted, O my Jesus, to see Thee, to possess Thee, to drink deeply at the Fountains of Eternal Life?

I await the dawn of that happy day with as much impatience as the exile waits for the hour which is to restore him to his home and country. I sigh with eager longing for its arrival, and nevertheless, O Lord, I desire only what Thou wilt. I feel that I have as yet done nothing to deserve the happiness for which I sigh, and that before I receive the Victor's crown I must wage the mortal strife.

O Jesus, Bread of Life, Bread of the strong,

sweet Manna from on high, from Thee alone can I derive strength to sustain the trial and weary combat of life. Thou wilt aid me to finish my course, Thou wilt teach me true self-sacrifice, Thou wilt engraft in my soul those virtues by which it must merit an eternal reward, and Thou, also, after instructing me to live a holy life, wilt enable me to die the death of the just.

O, Mary, mother of holy hope, refuge and help of sinners, thou who didst give life to the world when thou didst give us Jesus, extend, I pray thee, thy protecting hand, watch over us as we travel through the wilderness of this life, aid us in all the perils which assail the life of our souls, suffer us not to incur the danger of losing that spiritual life by means of mortal sin, but especially, Most Holy Virgin, protect us in the hour of death; show, then, that thou art indeed our mother, defeat the snares of our subtle enemy, strengthen us in the last awful combat, disperse the darkness and dread of our last agony, and obtain for us, grace to die in the immediate practice of perfect love. Amen.

**DEVOTIONS FOR THE  
THREE DAYS OF FORTY HOURS,  
THE QUARANT' ORE.**



## FIRST DAY.

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"The Good Shepherd giveth His Life for His sheep."—St. John  
x. 11.

*Act of Adoration.*

O Jesus, adorable Saviour, Thou who didst come down from heaven to follow Thy wandering sheep into all the waste places of the world, Thou who didst so love them as to die for them, and who dost still feed them with Thy most precious Flesh and Blood; I believe that Thou art really present in the Holy Eucharist, and full of faith in Thy Divine Presence, I prostrate myself at Thy Feet, and adore Thee as my Saviour and my God. Cast upon me a glance of pity, O my God, dart upon me a flame of love from Thy Sacred Heart, that I may praise Thee less unworthily, and offer to Thy Sovereign Majesty the homage of my gratitude and love; and that I may be acceptable in Thy Presence during this hour which I am now to pass at Thy Sacred Feet.



*First Subject of Meditation.*

It is with good reason that Jesus in the holy Gospel, calls Himself the Good Shepherd : He is, in fact, the one true Shepherd of the sheep, and no other shepherd has ever done for them what He, our adorable Lord and Saviour has done, and is ever doing for the flock committed to His care. From His Eternal Abyss of Glory and Greatness, the Word of God beheld the fall of the whole human race, in the person of the first man. Touched with compassion, He interposed between the sinner and the Justice of His heavenly Father, which was prepared to strike and destroy the guilty one, and becoming Flesh like the creature whom He willed to save, He left the eternal abodes of bliss, left the ninety-nine faithful sheep, that is to say, the nine choirs of angels who watch in ceaseless adoration around His throne of love, and came to seek out poor humanity, to find the wandering sheep, and to bring him back to the Fold.

The Good Shepherd sought His wandering sheep at first in the stable at Bethlehem. He became a little child in order to attract it to Him, He called it with sighs and tears, He pursued it into the desert of Egypt, He followed it into the land of strangers, He endured poverty, humiliations, sufferings ; He sought it afterwards in the towns of Judea, on the hill-sides of Galilee, He tried to tempt it to His Hand by the Bread of His Divine Word, and the marvels of His supernatural power. And at length, He sought it in the grotto of Gethsemani, amongst the thorns and scourges

of the Prætorium, on the steep ascent of Golgotha, on the Tree of the Cross; He was nailed to the Cross to wait for it; He opened His arms to embrace it, He washed it in the healing stream of His own Blood, He pressed it at length to His Heart in the supreme embrace of death, He restored it to life by His last sigh, and He brought it once more within the gates of the eternal Sheepfold, by an act of most generous and most heroic love.

And this is what the Good Shepherd has done for the whole human race, this is what He also does for each separate soul. Yes, every one of us may say, I am that lost and wandering sheep whom the Good Shepherd came on earth to seek and to save. It was I upon whom He called by His tears and infant cries in the stable of Bethlehem, in the poverty and privations of His exile, in the labours of the workshop at Nazareth, in the fatigues of His apostolic ministry; I was the wandering sheep for whom He sought, for whom He laboured. It was to strengthen my faith that He worked so many wonders, it was to comfort and instruct me that He pronounced so many words of wisdom and of life. It was for my sins that He wept in the Garden of Olives. It was to heal the innumerable wounds which sin had inflicted upon my soul, that His Sacred Flesh was torn and lacerated by the scourges of the executioners; it was to expiate all my sins of thought, of vanity, of pride, of ambition, that His adorable Head was crowned with thorns. It was for me, too, that He bore that heavy Cross, that under its weight He climbed the precipitous hill

of Calvary; it was for me that His sacred Hands and Feet were pierced through and through. Those streams of blood flowed from His sacred Wounds to expiate my sins; for me He drew His last breath, and heaved His latest sigh, He received the stroke of death to gain for me eternal life, and to bestow upon me a safe refuge from the storm, a covert from the heat, a place of shelter from the devouring enemy, and for me, also, He suffered the Roman soldiers to pierce His side after His death with a lance, and to leave in His very Heart, a wide, deep, open wound.

All this Jesus did for me; and I have as much interest and right in all this, as if I were the only soul that He came on earth to save, and He has done it for me, not coldly or unwillingly, but with joyful love, with ready willingness, esteeming Himself happy in suffering for me, in enduring for my salvation the most fearful torments which the malice of man could invent. And what have I done for Him? How have I rewarded the devoted affection and love of my adorable Shepherd? Alas! only with indifference and ingratitude; He has offered me His love, and I have refused to return it; He has opened His arms to embrace me, and I have turned coldly away; He has called me by the sweet inspirations of His grace, and I have resisted His voice, and refused to answer His tender summons; He has offered me His Heart, and I have disdained it, preferring the deceitful pleasures and false joys of the world, to the happiness of belonging to Jesus, to the delights of His friendship, to the pleasures of His love. Could there possibly be greater mercy, on

the one side, or greater ingratitude on the other ?  
And now, henceforward, what shall I do ?

*Affections.*

My heart is overwhelmed with grief as I come to fall at Thy sacred feet, O my good and adorable Shepherd, to implore Thy pardon, and strive to make amends for my long continued ingratitude. I have grieved Thy Heart, My Jesus ; I have wounded it by despising Thy love, and yet I still hope, and with entire confidence in Thee, I implore Thine infinite mercy. For the excess of my malice has been unable to extinguish the flame of Thy love ; and great and numerous as my iniquities have been, they are less than Thine infinite charity and goodness, O my God.

Thou didst seek me, Thou didst call me back when I fled from Thee, O most good, most merciful Shepherd ; and now that I am returning to Thee, now that Thy faithless child, Thy wandering sheep, is ready to answer Thy gracious call, and comes, contrite and penitent, to implore the pardon which Thou hast so frequently offered in vain, wilt Thou refuse to receive me ? wilt Thou be deaf to the cry of my repentance, and insensible to my tears ? Such a thought as this, O my Jesus, would be an insult to Thy loving Heart ; that Heart is still open to me ; from Thine altar throne Thou dost hear and receive my sorrow and repentant tears ; Thou dost confer upon my soul new graces, and askest for nothing in return, save my confidence and love.

How kind is Thy Sacred Heart, O my beloved Saviour! It is more tender, compassionate, and ready to pardon than the tenderest mother's heart. Never dost Thou repulse the sinner that returns to Thee; Thou openest Thine arms; Thou dost press Him to Thy Heart, Thou dost cleanse him in Thy blood, Thou openest to him the treasures of Thy grace, and Thy readiness to grant him forgiveness, is even greater than His eagerness to receive it. And Thy joy in the return of the poor sinner to Thine arms is so great, O good Shepherd of the sheep, that Thou dost call upon heaven and earth to rejoice with Thee; and the elect souls and the angels fill the celestial courts with songs of praise, when one of Thy wandering sheep is brought back to the sheep-fold in Thy loving arms.

The sheep which has wandered long and far from the fold, appears, O good Shepherd, to be the object of Thy peculiar care and tenderest love. Thou dost not strive to recall it by stripes and angry blows, but Thou dost take it gently in Thine arms, Thou layest it upon Thy shoulders to spare it the shame and fatigue of the journey home; Thou bindest up its wounds with tender and loving caresses, with gentle words of kind endearment, all its wanderings and ingratitude are quickly forgotten, only its repentance is remembered; and the lost and wandering sheep becomes the favoured one, the cherished darling of the flock.

But since Thy mercy and Thy kindness are so great, O Divine Shepherd of the sheep, suffer me to raise my voice in humble intercession for those unfaithful ones who leave Thy sheltering side, and

rush headlong into dissipation and worldly pleasures, seeking to slake their burning thirst at the broken cisterns, and to drink of the muddy and polluted waters, of earthly joys. Alas! they fill thy gentle and loving Heart with grief, they seem to find a cruel pleasure in renewing the sorrowful mystery of Thy Passion, they crucify Thee afresh, and put Thee to an open shame. Forgive them, O my Jesus, for they know not what they do. Be not weary of pursuing them, fill their ears with the powerful voice of Thy grace, suffer not the devil to steal from Thee those souls for which Thou hast paid so dear, let them not sink in the depths of that abyss to which they are so madly hastening. Open their eyes, Eternal Light, and dissipate the darkness in which they dwell. They were created to love Thee, O Lord, these souls which have wandered so far from Thy love, suffer them not to hate Thee eternally.

Accept, O my Saviour, our sincere desire to make reparation to Thy glory, and deign to hear the humble earnest prayers which we address to Thee, for all these unhappy sinners. Thou knowest, Lord, our sincere desire to bring back to Thee all those souls which have wandered from Thy fold; to cause all those to know and love Thee, who now know and love Thee not; but our desires are powerless, and we can but implore Thee to fulfil them, and to perform those things which Thou dost Thyself desire far more ardently than we can do. And in the name of Thy merits, and of all the blood which Thou hast shed for our souls, O adorable Lord and Shepherd of Thy sheep, I again implore Thee to take pity upon them, and

to save them. Suffer us once more to repeat to Thee those words of mercy, which from Thy cross Thou didst address to Thy Father in heaven, in favour of those who nailed Thee to the bitter tree, and in favour also of all those souls, who in the course of the ages to come, should renew, to such an extent as is possible to them, the outrages and torments of Thy Passion! Forgive them, O my God, for they know not what they do.

*Second subject for Meditation.*

When we consider the Cross, it seems to us, as if it must have been the very crowning point and climax of our Saviour's love, and that the Good Shepherd Himself, could do no more than give His life for the sheep. That *God* should die to save miserable and guilty *man*, is not that indeed the masterpiece, the excess, or if one may dare to say so, the holy extravagance of the love of a God? Ah, doubtless this is a mystery before which our reason sinks abashed, and our hearts throb with mingled gratitude and love. And yet the cross itself did not exhaust the charity of Jesus, His Heart still retained another mystery of love still greater, still more incomprehensible, and the gift which our Saviour bestowed upon us before He ascended the tree of the cross, and sacrificed His life for us, is still commemorated in the tabernacle and the altar.

Ah, our good Shepherd was not satisfied, even with giving His life for His sheep, it was not enough that He had gathered them into the fold,

beneath the shadow of His cross, fed them in the green pastures of His word, and led them to drink at the still clear waters of His grace. He has done still more than this, for He has fed them with His own flesh and Blood, He has bestowed Himself upon them, as the bread of life and immortality, and in giving Himself to His sheep, He has bestowed upon them an abundant life of grace and merits in time, and of glory in eternity.

The human shepherd feeds upon the flesh of his sheep, and clothes himself in their fleece, but our Heavenly Shepherd does far otherwise. He feeds His sheep with His own substance, He does not live by them, but He causes them to live by Him; He clothes them with His own justice, and yields to them entire command over those vast treasures of merit, which He acquired for their benefit alone; He sacrifices to them His virtues, He fills them with His Spirit, and He dwells amongst them to direct, guide, and comfort them, and to heal them when they are sick or wounded by the darts of sin. And our Heavenly Shepherd unites strict vigilance to His tender affection, His eyes are open, they close not by day or by night, from His altar-throne He keeps constant guard over His flock, and watches each individual sheep and lamb of which it is composed. He is ready to defend them at the first call of danger, He fights for them, and protects them from the power and wiles of the enemy. And when the storm of passion rises in their hearts, then does He call them to take refuge in His own, strengthens them with His strength, and calms the tempest by His sweet gentle words of grace.



Our adorable Shepherd knows His sheep, and they know Him; He knows and loves each one of them separately, and gives His grace to each with special modifications, as we may say, to suit every variety of character and disposition; He supports the weak, He carries the feeble and languishing in His arms; He encourages the strong to walk without stumbling; He comforts some, while He reproves and chastises others. He revives the weary, He awakes those that sleep, and sometimes He arrests the steps of the obstinate and disobedient by a salutary stroke from the crook of His cross, saving them from impending danger by timely chastisement.

Happy are the sheep that know their Shepherd's voice, that never doubt His love and kindness, that trust implicitly in His Sacred Heart; they follow Him wherever He goeth, never resisting His beloved guidance, but receiving trial and consolation with equal thankfulness from His hand. And happier still are they all burning with love divine, who remain ever close to His side, who will take no nourishment save from His hand, who desire no other joy save that of contemplating Him continually, who repose at His sacred feet, and rest upon His Heart.

Let it then be our glory to belong to our Heavenly Shepherd's fold, and to be counted in the number of His faithful sheep. Too long have we grieved His Sacred Heart by our infidelity, our ingratitude, and our resistance to grace; let us now earnestly strive to make amends to Him by our docility and love, and let us repair past errors by our redoubled zeal and ardour in His service. Let

us have recourse to our Heavenly Shepherd in all times of weakness and discouragement, let us follow Him courageously in the path of the cross; let us tread in His steps; if our strength fail His hand will support us; let us fly to Him in time of need, He will aid us in times of trial, let us seek comfort in Him alone; when we are weary, let us find rest only before the tabernacle, and there let us bind Him still closer to our hearts in Holy Communion, so that after living in Him and by Him in time, we may hereafter live with Him, and in Him, throughout a glorious eternity. Amen.

### *Affections.*

Praise and eternal glory be rendered unto Thee, O divine and adorable Shepherd of the sheep, who didst descend even from heaven to seek Thy wandering flock; who, to make satisfaction for them to the justice of Thy Father, didst pass Thy life in poverty, in suffering, and tears, who didst joyfully accept all the agonies of Thy Passion, and didst consent to be treated as the vilest among men, and to die upon the cross like a criminal. Be Thou for ever blessed, O my Jesus, let every knee bend low before Thee, let every tongue praise Thee, for Thou by Thy death hast merited eternal honour and glory.

But, above all, good Shepherd, may Thy name be praised for the most wondrous gift of Thy love, may all hearts throb with gratitude at the mention only of the Holy Eucharist, and may all Thy children hunger so ardently for that heavenly food,

that they may press eagerly around Thine altars, and all unite in rendering Thee due praise and thanksgiving for that inestimable benefit.

How can we praise Thee aright, O Blessed Saviour, how can we raise our gratitude to the level of Thy love? alas, what can we do, what can we render unto Thee, that shall in any way correspond with what Thou hast done for us? Thou didst deliver Thyself over unto death, in order to give us life, and in Thy wondrous love, Thou didst find a way to remain with us even until the consummation of the world, to become not only our guest and our friend, but even if we will receive it, our daily bread. By how many bonds should our lives be consecrated wholly to Thee! they belong to Thee, as our Creator and our Saviour; but they belong to Thee also for another reason, namely, that as Thou dost give Thyself to us in the most Holy Eucharist, Thou dost cause us to live by Thine own life, Thou dost identify Thyself with us, and makest us one body with Thyself.

But, alas! my Jesus, it is but too certain that even were we to consecrate our whole lives to pay Thee due homage of gratitude and love, that homage would be still unworthy of Thy Divine Majesty; and yet we do not even love Thee as we ought; one day we give our hearts to Thee, and the next we take them back again. During the course of a few days we are obedient to Thy heavenly inspirations, we are full of ardour and fire in Thy service, we seem heartily willing to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest; but no sooner hast Thou withdrawn the sweetness of those sensible

consolations which Thou didst once vouchsafe to bestow, than we are our own weak, cowardly selves again, we cannot suffer for Thee; we desire to have only joys when Thou didst endure so many and so bitter sorrows; we seek no longer Thy pleasure but our own in continuing in Thy service, and because we love none but ourselves, and have no courage or generosity in our hearts, we shrink back in the path of self-sacrifice, we are not ashamed to refuse to Thee, who hast done so much for us, the little acts of self-denial which Thou dost demand from us, in token of our gratitude and love.

Prostrate at Thy feet, O Adorable Shepherd, we deplore, in the bitterness of our hearts, all our unfaithfulness and offences; we detest them from our hearts, and we implore Thee to pardon Thy repentant children. Forgive us, O Lord; accept our repentance; Thou, who dost never reject the wandering sheep that humbly returns to Thee, but dost rather receive it with gentlest tenderness, and load it with fresh favours. Remember, O Lord, the wondrous love which caused Thee to sacrifice Thyself for us upon the Cross, and to shed the very last drop of Thy Blood for our salvation, and in the name of the infinite merits which Thou didst acquire during Thy life, and in Thy Passion hour, refuse us not the pardon which we now entreat with full confidence in Thine infinite mercy.

But it is not enough that Thou dost forgive us. O Good Shepherd, vouchsafe also to bless and strengthen the firm resolution which we make this day of offending Thee no more. From the

bottom of our hearts we desire to be Thine, Thine only, and for ever ; but we have learnt to distrust ourselves, in consequence of our past offences ; we dread our own inconstancy, our own weakness, and we implore Thee, O Jesus, to become Thyself our strength and safeguard, and to enable us to keep our resolutions. Have pity upon our weakness, O Good Shepherd, support our feeble steps, hold us by Thy hand, support us when we tremble and fail, revive our strength and courage, hide us in Thy Heart when danger approaches and threatens, and if need be, correct us also with Thy chastening hand, and even strike us with Thy cross, to bring us back from our wanderings, and to awaken us from that heavy sleep which ends so often in the sleep of death. But above all, O my Jesus, give us to drink, for we thirst ; we thirst for Thee, we thirst for Thy most holy Eucharist. It is at once the Bread that feeds us, and the Water of Life that quenches our burning thirst. Suffer us, then, to drink frequently at that Fount of every grace, and be Thou at once, in the Sacrament of Thy Love, our strength, our joy, and our life.

O Mary, Virgin Immaculate, Virgin full of clemency and pity, I salute Thee as the hope and refuge of poor sinners, I confide in thee, certain that I shall never perish under thy maternal and most powerful protection. Intercede for me with thy Divine Son, sweet Mary ; open to me by thy prayers, the doors of His Heart, implore Him to grant me forgiveness for all my sins, and deliver my soul from the infirmities which weaken and destroy it, and above all, O Blessed Virgin, suffer

not thy child to perish eternally, and may the trust which she has reposed in thee never be confounded. Amen.

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## SECOND DAY.

## THE SECOND MOSES.

“ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

*Act of Adoration.*

I adore Thee, O hidden God, and under the veil of obscurity which hides Thee from my eyes I acknowledge Thy grandeur and Thine unspeakable Majesty. I see but the appearances of natural Bread, but under these appearances, my faith perceives the God whom angels adore in heaven, and veil their faces with their wings, overwhelmed with the splendours of His glory. Penetrated with a deep feeling of my own nothingness and unworthiness, O my God, I acknowledge that I am not only utterly unworthy to converse with Thee, but even to appear in Thy Presence; but if the remembrance of Thy greatness makes me tremble, O my God, the recollection of Thy goodness and mercy restores my confidence. Thou dost stoop so low, only in order to raise me up to Thee, Thou dost descend even unto my lowliness, and here upon Thy Altar, Thou art not alone the God to whom I owe the homage of

lowliest worship and adoration, but Thou art also my Saviour and powerful Mediator, Who art ready and willing to speak in my behalf, and to plead my cause in the Presence of Thy Father. It is then with full confidence that I come, O my Jesus, to join my prayers with Thine, and to implore with Thee, and through Thee, all the graces which are needful to enable me to avoid sin, and to practise all those virtues which Thou dost require at my hands. Amen.

*First Subject for Meditation.*

When the chosen people of God were fighting with the Amalekites in the plains of Rephidim, Moses, their saintly leader, was on the top of a mountain from whence he could see the battle, while he stood with hands outstretched to heaven, imploring the God of armies to bless His people Israel, and give them the victory over His enemies. As long as the hands of the friend of God were outstretched and raised to Him, the people of Israel triumphed : but when he suffered them to drop through weariness and fatigue, the Amalekites prevailed. Aaron and Hur seeing this, caused the holy lawgiver to sit down upon a stone, and supporting him on either side, they kept his hands raised up until the setting of the sun, and the victory remained with the people of Israel.

It is easy to perceive in this event, which is preserved in the pages of Holy Scripture, a figure of the intercession of Jesus, the true Moses, for the

people whose Saviour and Lawgiver He has been graciously pleased to become. God in His great mercy bestowed upon the human race, not only a Prophet far more wise and powerful than the great legislator, who delivered the children of Israel from their servitude in Egypt, and led them into the promised land; but this Prophet was His own beloved Son. It was no longer the servant invested with power and authority from his Heavenly Master, making His commands known to His favoured and chosen people: it was now the Son of the Most High, the Master Himself, Who came in the strength of His own Almighty power, and inherent authority, to make known His Sovereign Will to the people of the whole earth, and to give a new Law to the world, even a Law of mercy and of love.

But Jesus came not only as a Lawgiver, but as a Saviour; He came to deliver all the nations of the world from their state of shameful slavery to the power of the devil, and to guide and lead them through the wilderness of this life, into the True Land of Promise. He came to wage war with the old Enemy of the human race, to conquer him, and to teach us the way to overcome him also. But in what manner did the Second Moses gain the victory over that formidable power, which from the very beginning of the world had held every child of Adam in stern subjection to his iron sway? He conquered him by means of humiliation, suffering, and His own all-powerful intercession with His Father. And with these weapons only did Jesus overcome His haughty enemy, and level his pride with the dust.



These weapons have been used by Jesus for the space of thirty-three years, but now comes the solemn moment which is to decide the victory at once and for ever. Hell has poured forth all its armies against the Son of Man, they surround Him with furious hatred, they struggle with despairing strength, they roar with savage rage, and as the tempest of fury howls around the meek and gentle Saviour, He arms Himself with the shield and buckler of humiliation and suffering, and with pale cheeks and tottering steps ascends the weary height of Calvary.

And as He slowly paces along the Way of Sorrows, each step made by His bleeding feet is a step to victory, and when at length He extends His arms upon the Tree of the Cross, and lifts up His heart and voice to heaven in continual ardent prayer, then is the conquest fully achieved. But still the battle rages, not yet has the foe laid down his arms, and for three long hours our Second Moses stands erect upon the Holy Mountain, nay, also upon the Altar of Sacrifice: no friends sustain His failing hands with their gentle grasp, but cruel nails make them fast to the Tree of the Cross; and during all those three long hours of fearful Agony, He never once suspends the utterance of His ardent prayer, He never for an instant intermits that earnest intercession for sinners, which He began with the first breath He drew in Mary's arms, and which His last sad sigh will fitly conclude with a glorious all-powerful Amen. Fiat.

When our bright Sun of Justice was darkened and eclipsed behind the heavy cloud of blood and

death which overshadowed Him on Calvary, the star of day with shuddering horror withdrew its rays from the scene of desolation, as if it feared to be suspected of participation in a crime so fearful, should it remain to absorb that innocent blood which was so thickly scattered upon the ground. But whilst thick darkness covered the world, the unearthly strife still continued, the apparent weakness of Jesus destroyed the strength of the enemy and the oppressor: His humiliation cast down his pride for evermore; His sufferings destroyed the glory and attraction of his vain and sinful pleasures; His Cross, as a Throne of weakness and strength, the one real, the other apparent only, overcame the kingdom of the evil one, and His Wounds, and bruises, and sores, broke asunder the fetters and bonds wherewith the unhappy slaves of the evil one were ignominiously loaded, whilst His ardent prayer opened to those liberated and ransomed sinners, the Gates of Heaven.

If the lifting up of the hands of Moses assured the victory to the children of Israel, if the ardour of his prayers prevailed mightily with God, how far more powerful must have been the pierced hands of our Redeemer, those hands from which flowed streams of blood and grace to purify the world and strengthen it, to give it power to overcome that fierce proud enemy, which now lay low at the foot of the cross, deprived of his boasted might, save that Jesus still left him a small faint shadow of his former strength, that His faithful disciples might put their love and courage to the proof by vanquishing him in their turn.

And if the prayer of Moses, that faithful servant

of the Most High, had such power with God that it availed to procure the utter overthrow and destruction of the heathen warriors, with how much greater power must the prayer of the Eternal Son of God be invested, when He offers it to His Father on behalf of His faithful people! Ah, that prayer did indeed open wide the Heart of God; it caused an abyss of love to open, and an inexhaustible fountain of mercy and pity to spring up for us within the Father's bosom. He offered it, our beloved Saviour, in the very midst of His most bitter sufferings, His long and cruel agony; He poured it forth, whilst His whole frame was burning, and His mouth dry and parched with that mysterious thirst which He experienced upon the bitter tree, while His soul thirsted as ardently for our salvation; He poured it forth amidst all His overwhelming horror and desolation of spirit, when He was *forsaken*, both by God and man. The Father heard the voice of the Son; He heard Him say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He heard His cry for pardon for sinners of every age and country, for the salvation for all the race of mankind in general, and for each member of it in particular. He listened tenderly to the voice of His well-beloved Son, and, turning to His inexorable justice, as she stood at the foot of His eternal throne, He showed her that innocent Victim of love, paying to the uttermost farthing the debt of humanity, and said to her, "What more dost Thou require? Is not the reckoning paid?" And then sweet mercy was set free to begin her task of compassion; on wings of love she left the Father's side, and bringing the

ransomed souls into the presence of their God, she caused them to sit down upon those vacant thrones which the sins of angels had emptied of their occupants, and the redeemed of Calvary were at rest for ever in the presence of their Saviour-King.

### *Affections.*

Glory, honour, and love be rendered to Thee for ever, O Jesus, Heavenly Victor, Conqueror of death and hell; let all people unite to praise Thy name, let all hearts join in offering Thee the humble tribute of their love and gratitude. For Thou hast let the oppressed go free, Thou hast broken their bonds in sunder; let all the nations of the earth praise Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name. It was for our sakes, O my Jesus, that Thou didst climb the steep hill of Calvary, it was for our sakes that Thy outstretched arms implored mercy from the cross; it was for our souls that Thou didst thirst so ardently; for our souls that Thou didst pour out Thy fervent prayer, that Thou didst with tears implore Thy Father's mercy and compassion; it was to restore us for ever to His favour that Thou didst suffer, deserted and abandoned, without one consolation, human or divine, enduring all the torments of Thy Passion and death. It was to raise us up to Thyself, that Thou didst descend into that abyss of deepest humiliation, and it was to strengthen our feebleness, that Thou, the Almighty Power of God, didst become weak, bowed down and exhausted,

worn out with suffering and woe. And it was to restore our life that Thou didst yield to death, and Thy last sad sighs, the last throbs of Thy Sacred Heart, were but the last acts of Thy incomprehensible love to our souls.

How can we show our gratitude for such amazing love, O most beloved Saviour? How can we ever love Thee enough? Alas! we need another Jesus to render to our Jesus a fit return for so much love; we need a heart like Jesus' Heart to love Him as we have been loved. Our hearts are weak and powerless, hard and cold, they can do nothing; and ah, too often, O my God, they desire not to do anything for Thee, they refuse the God who has given them all, the little which their poverty enables them to offer. Have pity upon us, O my Jesus, pardon this extreme ingratitude of which we are guilty, inspire us with holy generosity, with ardent fervour, that our lives may henceforth be but one long act of love, and a continual sacrifice offered to Thy glorious Majesty.

But the best way to prove our love to Thee, my Jesus, is to follow Thee in the way of sorrows which Thou wast pleased to trace out for us, and to use the same weapons in our battle with the enemy, wherewith Thou didst overcome him, humility, suffering, prayer. Such, O my God, is the inheritance which Thou hast left to Thy disciples; this is the armour which the Christian should assume, if he desires to gain the victory over the enemies of his salvation. And shall we then, O Lord, hesitate and shrink back from receiving that glorious inheritance which Thou dost bestow upon us, merely because we are

unwilling to put on that armour of God, upon which Thou didst confer eternal honour by assuming it Thyself? The disciple is not above his master, and if our pride revolts at the humiliations which are required of us, if our feeble nature shrinks from suffering; if spiritual exercises are often a hard task to our earth-bound souls, will not fervent prayer obtain Thy grace to enable us to overcome all these repugnances, and should we not esteem it an honour and a glory to suffer with Thee and for Thee, O my adorable Jesus?

Grant us then, O Lord, that deep humility which is so pleasing to Thy Sacred Heart, which attracts Thee to the soul of its happy possessor; that profound humility which escapes all the toils and snares of our spiritual enemies, and resists all their attempts, because it rests on Thee alone; that deep humility which no humiliation can affright, which loves humiliations, seeks them, rejoices in them, and receives them with gratitude from Thy Providential Hand. We implore Thee to give us that sweet humility, O my Jesus, for from Thy Heart alone can we obtain it, and from that Sacred Heart it flows forth abundantly.

Give us also, O my Saviour, true love of suffering, and a holy hatred of ourselves. How can we dare to contemplate Thy Cross, and to call ourselves Thy disciples and Thy friends, whilst we refuse to carry the Cross after Thee, and fear to suffer with Thee and for Thee, O my Lord? For Thou, pure, innocent, and spotless Lamb, didst suffer for our sakes, Thou didst endure all the penalty which our sins had deserved. And it is surely just that we, guilty sinners, should partake

in the cup of pain and sorrow, that we should fill up in our flesh those things that are wanting in Thy sufferings, and that we should follow Thee courageously in the narrow path which leadeth to Calvary and the Cross.

Finally, O Lord, grant us, we beseech Thee, that spirit of prayer which attracts Thy choicest graces and blessings, grant that we may be so fully penetrated with a sense of our own poverty and weakness, that we may seek for strength and riches in Thee alone. May our hearts call upon Thee unceasingly, to obtain Thy powerful succour, and at all times, in all places, in the day of sorrow, in the hour of peril and temptation, in all our trials and perplexities; may prayer be evermore our strength, our light, and our consolation. But since our prayers cannot be pleasing to Thee without Thy heavenly grace, inspire our hearts, O Lord, with such feelings of humility and love as may be able to touch Thy heart of love, and obtain from it all those graces which we ask and need. Give us that holy confidence which obtains all that it earnestly implores, that perseverance and fervour which are never wearied by delay, which take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, and suffer no hindrance to blight their hopes, or quench their ardent determination to obtain Thy grace. Finally, O Lord, suffer us to unite our prayers with Thine; and to cover their unworthiness, let them all pass through Thy Sacred Heart, and ascend to heaven on the wings of charity. Amen.

*Second Subject of Meditation.*

Hell was conquered, the shades of death rested upon the Hill of Calvary, the Sun of Justice had withdrawn His light, and the arms of the second Moses, so long outstretched upon the Cross, now sunk supine during His short sleep of death. But though the great enemy of the human race was overcome, though his power was destroyed, and his iron sceptre broken by the soft touch of the Redeemer's nail-pierced Hands : though man was now set free from the grasp of his cruel enemy, Jesus had even yet left that vanquished foe some power to fight with the people of His choice, with the new nation whom He was now about to guide and lead through the wilderness of this life, through the long course of ages, even until the last generations of His elect people should be gathered in, and brought safely into the eternal Land of Promise in the heavens.

It was necessary that we should still be compelled to fight with the enemies of our salvation, for without continual strife and combat we should have had no means of increasing our humility, or of acquiring greater courage and magnanimity, or of augmenting the sum of our merits and virtues. The holy Patriarch, Job, tells us, that the life of man is a continual warfare; and St. Paul, in later days, warned his Christian converts, that he alone who fights the good fight of faith, can hope to win that eternal crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, reserves for the victors in the strife; the conquerors of the world, and the devil.



It is therefore for our own good that our Divine Head still suffers us to be exposed to temptation ; whilst at the same time He teaches us how to overcome all the enemies of our salvation. He knows too well our weakness to leave us to our own unassisted strength, He knows that we can do nothing without Him, no good thing without the succour of His grace ; and therefore He dwells in the midst of us, not to be an idle spectator of our conflict, but to take an active part, to keep His arms continually outstretched, and His Heart upraised to God in continual prayer.

The outstretched arms of our second Moses, now lay still and sunk in death. But in the upper chamber He had created a new form of life, another existence for Himself, and now behold His love has led Him to sit down upon His Altar Throne ; the Catholic Priesthood has, for eighteen centuries, sustained His Arms uplifted still to heaven, and never will those Arms, raised in continual intercession for us, be suffered to fall. Jesus will never quit that stone of the Altar, or the tabernacle where He is now enthroned, until that day arrives which shall last for endless ages, when the pale sun which lights our earth shall sink in darkness before the light of that radiant eternal Sun of Justice, which shall shine for ever and for ever—the Altar, that is, the sacred mountain whence the voice of continual all-powerful intercession rises with ceaseless flow to the Ear and Heart of the Almighty, Eternal God. That voice proceeds from Jesus' Heart, our Blessed Lord prays upon the mountain whilst His people combat in the plain, and daily, from North

to South, from East to West, amongst all tongues and nations and people, thousands of priests support His Arms in prayer; nay, they raise His Sacred Body on high, they lift Him up as a shield and buckler to cover His people from the fiery darts of the enemy; they set Him up as a rampart, and a refuge from the fury of the destroyer, as a pure sacrifice to appease the wrath of God; as a gift and offering whose infinite value is fully able to make satisfaction to all the requirements of His justice, and to obtain the eternal salvation of sinners.

As years and centuries flow on, the generations of men pass away in rapid succession, like the waves of a rushing mighty river, which flows impetuously onwards to merge and mingle in the ocean. Man passes away, but Jesus dwells there still, and no change, no tumult interrupts the ceaseless flow of praise and intercession from His adorable Heart. To those poor human combatants who yesterday continued the strife, and waged weary ceaseless war against the world and the devil, a fresh generation of warriors has now succeeded, Jesus prayed for them, He prays for these also; each succeeding generation of His faithful soldiers is equally dear to His Heart, is equally the object of His solicitude, since they are all enrolled in the vast army of the Church, of which He is the Head, and whilst with one hand He bestows upon the victors in the strife, the glorious crown which they have won; with the other He bears up those who are still militant below, and points them to heaven, where the same glorious prize awaits them.

Upon our altars, in the silence and solitude of the tabernacle, Jesus never ceases to intercede for His Church. He is its Heart, He is its Voice, He is its Mediator, its support, its life, He is its *All*, in the Holy Eucharist. Yes, it is to the prayers of her Heavenly Spouse that the Church on earth owes all her victories, all her triumphs; to them she owes her immortal life and fruitfulness, as well as that bright crown of virtues, twined of unfading flowers, which never withers with age, but blooms afresh day by day with the blossoms of sanctity and innocence, which the saints in perpetual succession bring to maintain the freshness of that immortal crown.

It is the prayers of Jesus in the tabernacle that have obtained for the Church, the zeal of her apostles, the courage of her martyrs, the purity of her virgins, the charity and self-devotion of her priests; for Jesus prays for all, He prays for each person in particular, and His prayers not only preserve and save the world, they not only restrain the justice of God from punishing the guilty as they deserve, but they also multiply and increase the number of the just before God, and obtain for them an abundant measure of those graces which cause them to bring forth fruit abundantly, and to become the ornament and the glory of the Church.

How consoling is this thought, "*Jesus is praying for me.*" By night and day, from that dark silent tabernacle, His voice ascends without ceasing to God in heaven for me, He prays for all my loved ones, He prays for those poor sinners who are very far from God, but of whom many are

very near and dear to me, He prays that life and salvation may be granted to those who are spiritually dead, for whose sins I have long wept so bitterly. I have prayed for them, but Jesus prays for them far more earnestly. And can the prayers of Jesus fail to be heard? shall His voice plead in vain? He offers in my name to His Heavenly Father, prayer and adoration, such as I am utterly unable to render to Him myself; He asks for graces for me which I know not how to demand; He pleads my cause and obtains my pardon when I have offended against Him; He gives thanks also for those blessings which He does not cease to heap upon my unworthy head, ungrateful as I have been, and He renders in my name, those thanks, and pays that debt of gratitude which I have failed to discharge. Oh it is indeed a sweet, a consoling thought, but it is also one that should animate me with a holy zeal to join my fervent prayers and thanksgivings with those of my Divine Mediator. This thought should fill me with holy confidence, for how can we fear rebuff when we pray in union with Jesus? Whatever you shall ask in My name, our beloved Saviour has said, the Father will give it you. How certainly then may we believe that the Father will grant our prayer when we ask, not only in the Name of Jesus, but *with* Jesus, and when Jesus Himself asks it with and for us.

*Affections.*

How great, how incomprehensible is Thy love, O my Lord! Thy delight is to dwell with the children of men, Thou lovest to be their guest, their friend, their leader, and their guide; and Thou art not contented with remaining an unoccupied spectator of their combats, but Thou dost assure them of final victory, by stretching out Thy Hands in benediction and protection over their heads, and by raising Thy Hands to heaven, to obtain for Thy beloved ones, courage in the strife, and strength to overcome the devil, the world, and themselves.

Blessed for ever be the adorable Heart of my Jesus, that most sweet and gentle Heart, which is our mediator and intercessor with God. Thou art never weary, O my Jesus, of interceding for poor exiles on earth; Thou dost never cease to appease Thy Father's justice by unceasing prayer, Thou dost continually call down His mercy upon the poor sinners whom Thou dost honour with the name of Thy friends and brethren. Yes, Lord, we acknowledge it with thankful love, to Thy mediation alone are we indebted for all those mercies and benefits which we receive daily from our Heavenly Father's hands. It is Thy presence in the midst of us, which saves this world of sinners from destruction, it is Thy intercession which averts the wrath of God, and arrests the chastisement which His justice is ready to inflict upon it.

Yes, Lord, it is too true, our iniquities are

multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us, for our transgressions are ever before our eyes. But Thy intercession, O my Jesus, averts the judgment of the Lord, He looks upon the guilty world, and He beholds the altar ; He sees Thine arms outstretched to pray for mercy, He hears the sighs, the tears of Thy Heart of love, and the darts of His vengeance fall powerless against the interposing screen of the tabernacle.

O Sacred Heart, O most compassionate and merciful Heart of our Divine Mediator, Heart all burning with love for men, pleading our cause so zealously, as Thou dost meekly dwell in the silence and solitude of the tabernacle ; we adore Thee this day, exalted on this altar throne of mercy and love ; and prostrate at Thy feet we come to join our feeble prayers to Thine, and to implore Thee to offer them, together with Thine, to Thy Father, that for Thy sake He may deign to hear and receive them favourably. Suffer us then, O Lord, to pray Thee first for our mother the Church, stretch out over her Thine almighty hand, cover her with Thy powerful protection, defend her against the violence of her enemies, bring back into her maternal bosom all those who are separated from her by schism or heresy, restore to her all those wandering children who grieve her loving heart, and over whom she never ceases to shed tears, increase the number of her faithful children, and confer on her a crown of glory by multiplying her saints, and by raising up children in her bosom who may be her strength and her everlasting joy.

Watch most especially, O my Saviour, over the

Pontiff, whom Thou hast placed at the head of Thy Church, fill him with Thy Spirit, establish him in the ways of sanctity and justice, that he may be enabled also to establish in the same, all the Churches which Thou hast confided to his paternal care. Defend him in all dangers, comfort him in all his sorrows, open to him Thy Sacred Heart, and may he find there a safe asylum in all the trials which Thy Divine Providence may have in store for him.

Bless Thy whole Church with holy bishops, O my Saviour; protect and bless abundantly him who governs the diocese in which we live, be Thou his strength, his light, and his guide, and give him also, O my God, priests according to Thine own heart; be Thou the light and wisdom of the doctors of Thy Church, the strength and courage of its confessors and martyrs, the purity of its virgins, and the help and support of all its children.

Have pity also, O my Jesus, upon all poor sinners, enlarge the bowels of Thy mercy in their regard, remember all that Thou hast done for them, all the blood which Thou hast shed for them, and for Thy mercy's sake, suffer them not to perish, O my God. These are the wandering sheep whom Thou didst come to seek and save, O good Shepherd of the sheep; and it is for them, and for their salvation, that Thou dost continually address Thy prayer to Thy Heavenly Father, as Thou dwellest in the solitude of the tabernacle. Hear then, O Lord, our humble prayers, which we sinners ourselves, venture to offer to Thee for these our fellow sinners; let not our unworthiness be an obstacle to Thy mercy, but may Thy precious

blood, in the name of which we pray, obtain for them a full and free remission of all their sins, and the grace of a sincere, complete conversion.

Be Thou also, O my Saviour, the strength and support of the just, preserve them in Thy grace, augment their virtues, and grant them the crowning grace of final perseverance. Console all those who are in pain and suffering, O my Jesus, and bestow upon them all the courage and resignation of which they have so much need, to enable them to make a holy use of the crosses and afflictions which Thou dost see fit to send them; be Thou also, O Lord, the consolation of the poor, and dispose the rich to communicate freely to them of their abundance. Sanctify the poor by patience, and the rich by charity. Speak peace to the troubled heart, give light to those in doubt and perplexity, and joy to those who are sunk in sorrow. Finally, O my Saviour, suffer us once more to implore Thy mercy for all those souls who are still so dear to us, who have entered before us into the eternal world. Never can we forget them, O my Jesus, our love still follows them to the world beyond the tomb, their interests are still closely bound up with ours, and our hearts still feel, and suffer deeply in their sufferings. Have pity, O my Jesus, upon those souls whom Thy justice still detains in the place of expiation, be Thou not only their Mediator, but their Saviour, sprinkle upon those poor suffering souls one single drop of that blood which Thou didst shed so freely for their salvation, and the devouring flames which now surround them shall be extinguished by Thy blood, and the burning thirst for love which now con-



sumes them, shall be quenched at the fountains of eternal life.

And now that we have prayed to Thee for our brethren, what shall we ask for ourselves, O Lord, for, alas! far better than ourselves Thou knowest the extent and multitude of our necessities, Thou knowest how heavily the load of trial and sorrow weighs upon our hearts, how many dangers threaten us, what bitter grief draws floods of tears from our eyes.

Thou knowest all the needs of our souls, O Lord, dispense to us then the alms of Thy grace, according to the extent and number of our necessities; but give us, above all, Thy love, and grant that it may ever be our strength, our treasure, and our consolation.

O Mary, Virgin Immaculate, thou who art our mediatrix with thy Divine Son, as He is our Mediator with the Father, do thou, our Mother and our hope, present our hearts to thy Divine Son, that He may accept the offering, and enrich them with the treasures of His grace; that He may also receive their adoring homage, and accept their love. Suffer us to join our humble adoration to that which Thou dost offer Him in His glory. And then, O tender Mother, supply the imperfections of thy children, by adoring Jesus for us in the sacrament of His love; by offering to Him those transports of gratitude which that adorable sacrament excited in thy pure and loving heart; love thou for us, the most sweet God of the Holy Eucharist, whom we also hope to love and to bless with thee throughout eternity. Amen.

## THIRD DAY.

## THE RAINBOW.

I will set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant that I make with the earth.—Genesis ix. 13.

*Act of Adoration.*

O Jesus, Eternal Splendour of the Father, Divine Sun of Justice, Thou who dost hide Thy glory under the abasement of Thy most Holy Eucharist, behold us prostrate at Thy Feet, adoring Thee to-day as the support and the foundation of our hope, as our Saviour, and as our Peace. It is to Thee, it is to Thy Blood, O God of love, that we owe all the benefits which we receive in such abundance: it is Thy adorable Blood that has cemented the alliance which the Lord has graciously condescended to make with His people, and in that Blood He has signed the new treaty of peace which He has concluded with our earth. Deign therefore to accept, O Lord, the homage of our adoration and grateful love, and suffer us, when we contemplate the Cross, when we contemplate Thee really present upon this Altar, to banish fear completely from our hearts, and to fill them with the sweetest feelings of gratitude, hope, and love. Thou art with us, O my Jesus, Thou art ours, what now can we fear? May we not hope confidently for every grace and blessing from Thine Almighty Hand?

*First Subject for Meditation.*

When the waters of the deluge were withdrawn, Noe left the Ark, and building an altar to God, he offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and worshipping Him with his whole family in humblest adoration, he gave thanks to God, whose Almighty Hand had so marvellously protected them all, whose goodness and mercy had preserved them from that fearful death, which had overtaken the remainder of the human race. God cast a glance of compassion upon His faithful servant, He accepted the sacrifice which he offered, and deigned to answer him in the following words: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living soul that is with you, for perpetual generations. I will set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. And when I bring clouds over the earth, My bow shall be seen in the clouds, and I will remember My covenant between Me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a deluge to destroy all flesh." (Genesis ix. 8, 15.)

All the holy fathers of the Church agree in considering this Rainbow, the visible sign of the mercy of God, to be a figure of Jesus immolated upon the Cross and the Altar, to appease the just anger of His Father, and to restrain the execution of His Justice upon the world. For the wickedness of men had again covered the whole earth, their cries of rebellion and fury ascended to the Throne of God, and provoked His righteous ven-

geance. God kept His promise, He did not again break up the fountains of the great deep, and bury the guilty world under the waters of another deluge; but sin, like the burning wind of the desert, swept the whole earth with its poisonous breath, and carried off legions of souls into the abyss of destruction, as the withered leaves are whirled away by thousands in the autumnal blast. The yawning mouth of hell swallowed up millions of souls which were created to love and to glorify their Creator eternally, but who were hurried away by the torrent of corruption, and lost in eternal ruin.

But in the fulness of time, the Word descended from heaven, full of tenderest love and compassion for fallen man; He arrested the course of that swelling flood of iniquity which threatened to overwhelm the whole human race; He interposed Himself between the Justice of His Father, and the guilty race of man; for thirty-three years He stood between them upon earth, opposing the pride of man by His own profound self-abasement and humiliation, the cupidity of man by His poverty, and the sensuality of man by His bodily sufferings; His Heart was the true Ark of refuge which He opened to humanity, as a safe shelter from the wrath of the Most High. And at length He ascended the Altar of Sacrifice; His Blood paid the ransom of the universe, and His Cross was raised between earth and heaven for a sign of mercy and peace, a pledge of the new covenant and alliance which God had contracted with our humanity.

The Cross, the true and heavenly Rainbow,

planted upon Mount Calvary, still reigns over the world; it extends its shadow over all people and nations and tongues, it is the sign of salvation to all, of hope and peace to all: the eyes of men are turned towards it from all quarters of the world, the universal voice of man salutes it with gratitude and love, and when we feel that our iniquities have separated between us and our God, when they have become a burden too heavy for us to bear, when the clouds of the wrath of God hang dark and threatening above our heads, and we hear the thunder of His vengeance rolling in the distant heaven, then our eyes are turned instinctively towards the Cross, our hands are outstretched towards it, we fly to take refuge at its foot, we embrace it confidently, for well we know that in the sight of God it is still empurpled with the Blood of His Son, and we seem to hear His voice saying unto us, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have made with you, and for the sake of Him who hung upon the Cross, I will have mercy upon sinners."

As the Rainbow after the deluge was a sign of peace and protection, so the Cross stretches its arms over the world to protect sinners, whilst He who hung upon it attracts the most guilty souls to Himself, and often raises them to the sublimest heights of sanctity on earth, in preparation for the thrones of glory which they shall hereafter occupy in heaven. The rainbow makes its appearance on stormy, cloudy days, but then it announces that the tempest is nearly over, that the clouds are about to disperse, and that the sun will shortly break out in all its glory; its graceful Bow and

brilliant colours are rendered still more lovely by the contrast with the black thunder-cloud which hangs behind, or slowly recedes in the distance. And so does the Cross appear in our darkest hours of sadness, and when the thunder-cloud of sorrow overshadows our souls, it shines forth in wondrous brightness, and guides our thoughts to a world of joy, where sorrow shall never come: or when a tempest of desolation has swept over us, destroying all our earthly happiness in one crash of destruction, then does the Cross with soft and healing ray, revive other hopes, and call up thoughts of heaven in our shattered souls, bidding us turn from the ruins and decay of earth, to the contemplation of our heavenly home, that City of Peace, where sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Let us cling then to the Cross, and let Jesus crucified be ever our only hope, our only love. Like the great apostle, let it be our glory to know nothing but Jesus crucified; let us trust in Him, let us imitate Him, let us bear our cross after Him, and with Him; above all, let us love Him, and then He will be our Comforter during all the days of our life, and the sign of our salvation through Him will again appear to us upon our bed of death, as the pledge of peace and everlasting glory.

*Affections.*

When I behold Thy Cross, my Jesus, I am filled with hope, I embrace it lovingly, and under that safe shelter I fear no more the justice of Thy Heavenly Father, for could He strike the heart which is guarded by that sacred shield? or could He refuse to pardon the soul that implores forgiveness in the name of that adorable Blood, which flowed upon the Cross for our salvation? Yes, I hope, O my God, but I hope in Thee alone: I have not forgotten my sins and extreme misery, but this misery is itself my surest title to Thy mercy, and the poorer I am, the more naked and empty of all good, so much the more will Thy mercy be glorified in my salvation, so much the greater will be Thy love and kindness in applying to me the infinite merits of Thy Redemption.

My Jesus, I would unceasingly repeat these words of the Prophet King: "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me not be confounded for ever." I hope, I trust in Thee alone, my Jesus, my beloved Saviour, and if ever my hope should fail, one look at the Cross, one utterance of Thy sacred name, would be sufficient to dispel the gathering shades of doubt, and to revive my failing hope and courage.

I hope, O my God, although my sins are great and manifold. I know that none of the faults that I have committed can escape Thy clear and penetrating Eye. Thou knowest my offences, and the way in which I have, alas, abused Thy mercy and love; but I know that Thy mercy is far

greater than my sins, and that the greater are my iniquities the greater will be the glory of Thy mercy and goodness, in granting me complete forgiveness. But in proportion to Thy goodness, O my God, should be my heartfelt sorrow for offending Thee so deeply; and therefore I do most earnestly detest my sins, I abhor my own ingratitude, and I feel that I would rather die a thousand times, than voluntarily commit a single mortal sin.

I repent, O my Jesus, but my repentance is full of confidence; I see and embrace the cross, its shadow is extended over my soul; I love and bless the cross of my salvation, I cling to it as my strength and support, I hold fast to it as the anchor of my salvation. Ah, how sweet are those tears which I shed at the foot of the cross! they are like a heavenly dew to refresh my weary soul, and to restore its innocence and peace. May the tears of my repentance, O most sweet Jesus, be mingled with Thy most precious blood, and, flowing over my sinful soul, may they purify it from every stain.

But it is not alone, O Lord, with sentiments of regret and sorrow that my heart is filled, when I contemplate Thy cross! That cross, tinged so gloriously with Thy blood, O my Jesus, chiefly arouses my tenderest love, by proclaiming Thine; and when I bathe it in my tears, when I press it to my heart, then do I truly feel that I love Thee, and will ever love Thee in life and in death. O love, infinite love of my Jesus, triumph over my coldness and indifference, triumph over my cowardly fears, reign supreme in my heart, and inflame



it with that sacred fire which burns so brightly in Thine own. Expand, extend, enlarge its faculties and powers of loving, that I may hereafter love immeasurably and boundlessly, Him who has loved me with such wondrous love.

I ask not, Lord, for the enjoyments, but for the sufferings of Thy love ; I desire to love Thee as Thou hast loved me, and my sole ambition is to suffer for Thee, and to immolate myself wholly and entirely upon the altar of Thy love. Take away all else, O my God, deprive me of everything that can dispute with Thee the entire possession of my heart ; but leave me Thy cross, leave me Thy love ; be Thou, O Jesus crucified, my only happiness, my only treasure, my only hope ; then shall I never have a tear to shed, or a single regret to bestow upon those things of which Thou hast seen fit to deprive me.

O holy Way of the Cross, way in which my beloved Master has painfully trod, way in which He has been followed by all His saints, thou art the only way in which my feet shall henceforth tread, the thorns and briars wherewith thou art thickly strewn, have no terrors for me, for is not Jesus there to support my weakness ? and with His guiding hand, what have I to fear ?

But, alas, O my Jesus, it is in vain that I hope to partake with Thee in the cup of Thy tribulation and grief, in vain do I desire to surround my heart with Thy crown of thorns, for Thou hast drained the bitter cup of sorrow to its very dregs, and I find nought but happiness in Thy service, O my God. I ask for suffering, and Thou givest me joy, for where Thou art, my Jesus, sorrow and suffering

flee away; and grief is turned to joy, when the heart that feels it is suffered to rest on Thine, and to find comfort in Thee.

But Thou knowest, O my Lord, that I desire to be Thine for ever, Thine in sorrow as in joy, in affliction and in prosperity; and if it should be Thy will to deprive me of the sweetness of Thy sensible consolations, and to bring me into participation of the bitterness of Thy sufferings, when abandoned upon the cross; then, O my Jesus, still support my weakness, suffer not Thy love to grow cold within my heart, but grant that the crosses which I bear, and the trials which I am permitted to suffer, may serve but to purify my soul, and to increase its courage and its strength. Amen.

*Second Subject for Meditation.*

If the cross extends its arms over the whole world to cover it with its protecting shade, if it is to the whole human race a sign of hope and peace, if it stands uplifted high on Calvary, for an imperishable monument of the mercy and the love of our God; there is yet another sign, which speaks to us in still clearer, louder tones of His mercy and His love; and this sign, our hearts already feel it—it is the most Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist shines in the Church's sky, as the symbol and image of the eternal alliance which the Lord has concluded with her, it is the true rainbow which shines in the brightest, loveliest colours, and displays to the eyes of men

the wisdom, power, and love of their ever-present God.

The rainbow is a fitting image of the most Holy Eucharist, for as it is a reflection of the sun's rays upon a dark cloud, which it adorns with all those brilliant colours that are so attractive to the eye, so the most Holy Eucharist is not only the image of the Sun of Justice, but it is Himself, and He is not only depicted and figured in the darkness of the material elements of the sacrament, but He is really there, though His brightness is veiled and hidden from our sight.

When the day of His mortal life was nearly ended, when the hour drew near in which His great sacrifice was to be consummated, then did the love which Jesus bore in His Heart for us, become more fervent than before, then did He at length realize and execute that work of infinite charity to mortal man, which He had meditated during all the days of His mortal life, and not only then, but during the ages of eternity, when He abode in the bosom of His Father, and had not yet assumed our frail humanity. And what was that work of infinite love? Ah, we all know it well; He took bread, and changed it into His own flesh by the exercise of His almighty power, preserving only the species, or appearances of bread, under which He concealed His glory, and upon which He traced the image of His sufferings and death, that the Holy Eucharist might remain as a perpetual memorial of His Passion.

But if the rainbow charms our eyes by the exquisite variety and beauty of its colouring, how much more should the Holy Eucharist delight our

souls, by the rich treasures of love and mercy which it contains. It is a treasure which includes all the divine perfections; power, wisdom, goodness, immensity, and eternity, are united there; the adorable body of our Saviour enjoys all the privileges of glorious bodies, agility, impassibility, subtilty, and brightness; all graces are contained in it, since Jesus is Himself the source and fount of grace, all kinds of graces, natural and supernatural, actual and sanctifying, all are found in Jesus, all are to be obtained in the most Holy Eucharist.

The diversity of the wonders which this adorable sacrament contains, is in proportion to the multiplicity of its perfections and blessings. In fact, what can possibly be more completely opposed to the immensity of the Word Incarnate, than the smallness of the Host in which His immensity is contained, and, as it were, abridged, without however losing one particle of its infinite extent? What can be more opposed to His eternity than the shortness of the time that the sacred species are preserved within us? And what an astonishing contrast between the almighty power of the God who sustains the universe, and the fragility of the accidents which we personally receive?

What a difference also between His sovereign independence, and that state of dependance to which He voluntarily reduces Himself in this mystery; between His immortality and the mystic death which He undergoes daily upon the altar! What a contrast between that sovereign empire which Jesus exercises over all His creatures, and the prompt obedience rendered by Him to the word of the humblest among His priests! The

marvels hidden in this adorable sacrament, do indeed surpass the understanding of angels and of men.

The union, the harmony which exists between two things so radically different, is not less admirable than their diversity ; no wisdom, no power, but that of God, could have effected these wonders, could have caused the glorious body of our Redeemer to be present at the same time in heaven, and also wherever a consecrated Host is to be found on earth ; could cause Him to be present in all places where the act of consecration is performed, and yet to be not multiplied ; could cause His adorable body to remain undivided, when the Host, which contains Him, is broken ; and to remain whole and entire under each of its parts.

The sun shining upon a dark cloud, produces, by the admixture of darkness and light, those vapours which serve as a ground-work upon which to display the glorious colours and forms which we admire in the rainbow. At the first glance, it would seem as if glory and light were absent in our heavenly rainbow ; but the practised eye of faith discovers that glory soon, and the believing heart falls low in humblest adoration. Jesus, true Sun of Justice, enlightens with His presence the sacred species, which are the dark cloud under which He hides Himself. He hides Himself, indeed, from the proud reason of man, but He reveals Himself to the eye of faith and humility ; He veils His power and glory, but He makes His presence clearly felt by the soul that receives Him, or visits Him with faith and love. He hides His justice, while He patiently endures for a time the

sacrileges which are too often committed against His sacrament of love ; but punishment will fall with sudden violence upon the sacrilegious receiver, the lightning will dart from the cloud which has hitherto concealed it, and will leave behind it in its headlong course the fearful tokens of the wrath and justice of an offended God. But the world is alarmed, amazed, but not converted by these sudden strokes, it does not recognize the Hand that dealt the blow ; faith only solves the mystery, and the angels inscribe the deed amongst the records of the just vengeance of the terrible wrath of God. In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus hides His greatness, but He manifests in soft resplendent colours, His goodness, mercy, and love, by means of those admirable fruits which it produces in those souls that faithfully and lovingly receive Him ; the virtues of those saintly souls are the reflected image of our Saviour's, and our Blessed Lord's humility, His patience, and His charity, are the sweet lovely colours which are displayed in our admirable heavenly Rainbow.

The Holy Eucharist, in short, is the most excellent and admirable sign, of the mercy and clemency of our God. This adorable sign protects and saves the world, and the Victim ever immolated upon our altars, does not only appease and make satisfaction to the justice of God, but also draws down upon us the rich abundance of His graces and blessings. Let us, then, unite to bless and praise the Heart of that God who has accorded us so magnificent a gift, let us confide fully in that Heart which loved us, and let us love it as much as we are capable of loving, so that our

whole life from this time forth may be but one long act of love to the God of the most Holy Eucharist.

*Affections.*

How can we possibly refuse to love Thee in that place where Thou art so lovely, O Jesus, God of mercy and goodness, of compassion and love? How can we have a heart, and fail to consecrate to Thee all its affections, all its feelings, all its throbs of love? Thou art good, and sweet, and lovely, in all places, O my Saviour; but Thou art best, and loveliest there, where Thou dost give Thyself to us, where Thou dost give Thyself to us with a lavish prodigality of love, where Thou art not only our guest, our friend, where Thou dost not only live with us, and amongst us, but Thou dost deign to become Thyself our food and nourishment, Thou dost descend into our inmost souls, and dost unite Thyself to us, so closely, and so intimately, that Thou dost even make us *one* with Thyself.

Ah, Thou art indeed lovely, altogether lovely, O my Jesus, and yet can I dare to say it, Thou art not loved! Thou hast loved men with such an ardent, burning, passion of love, and yet men love not Thee! Whence is this excess of ingratitude, O my God! Ah, it is because they do not know Thee with that close intimate knowledge that gives birth to love; they will not learn Thy Heart; and to many, alas, Thou art still an unknown God, like some eminent personage whose name and mighty deeds they read in history, whom they

admire, but never love. Others, again, believe in the love which led Thee to sacrifice Thyself upon the cross; but to them, this love, this devotedness, is like a thing of the past, an event of ages long gone by, a sentiment long ago forgotten and extinct; they never think of appropriating Thy love, of applying it to themselves; but they consider it in a superficial, general manner, and simply say: "Jesus died for all men;" whereas they ought to say: "Jesus died for all, it is true, but He also died for each one of us in particular; it was then for me that He suffered and died, He loved me, and gave Himself for me." That Sacred Heart which sacrificed itself for my salvation, is the same loving Heart now, that it was on the day of His Passion; His love is ever the same, always just as tender, as lively, as burning, as then, and as ready and willing to offer Himself again for us, if such an offering were necessary.

How very few are there, O my Jesus, who know Thy Sacred Heart, as they know the heart of their father, their mother, or their dearest and most intimate friend; how few rest upon Thee and confide in Thee, as they trust and confide in those beloved beings! Ah, bestow upon me, O my God, that tender intimate acquaintance with Thy Heart. Open it to my loving gaze, suffer me to penetrate into those mysteries of love that it contains; make me to count upon that love with complete certainty, to rest confidently upon it, to be inflamed and penetrated by it to the inmost recesses of my being.

Strengthen my faith, enlighten it that it may be able to pierce the veil which hides Thee from our



sight in the most Holy Eucharist; and let me no longer seek Thee as a God afar off, but as a God really present amongst us, living with us, and dwelling with us.

Yes, I love Thee in Thy Holy Eucharist, O my Jesus, and how could I fail to love Thee there? Art Thou not the bread which sustains my strength, which renews it when I am weak, and exhausted, and weary? Art Thou not my friend, to console me in my sorrows, to aid me in the day of trial, to enable me to bear the heavy burden, and pursue the toilsome road of life? Art Thou not also the guide who points out to me the way in which I should walk, the sun which lightens my path, and dissipates the clouds and darkness which encompass me?

I love Thee, O my Jesus, in Thy most Holy Eucharist, for Thou art my peace, my Mediator, and my hope. When I fall, Thy hand raises me up; when I have offended, Thou dost sweetly plead my cause; when the justice of Thy Father is ready to chastise me, Thou dost disarm the terrors of His avenging hand, Thou dost open to me Thine Heart as a true refuge, a covert from the storm, a refuge from the heat, the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

I love Thee in Thy most Holy Eucharist, O my Jesus, because Thou art the water which quenches my thirst for happiness, because Thou alone canst quench the burning thirst of my soul, and yet dost leave it more burning still. Thou dost inebriate me with Thy delights, Thou dost permit me to taste in Thee a joy which is not of earth, and a pleasure which never produces satiety; but

increases the desires of the heart for good, whilst it satisfies all its needs. I love Thee, and I earnestly desire to love Thee more. I possess Thee, and yet I desire to withdraw those light fragile veils which conceal from me the sight of Thy eternal beauty. My happiness is great, it is true, but it is but the happiness of time, whereas my enraptured soul demands the happiness of eternity.

I love Thee, O my Jesus, in Thy most Holy Eucharist, because in it Thou art my treasure, Thou art all-sufficient to my heart, and without Thee, all is nothing to me. I love Thee, because Thou art my life, which Thou dost bestow upon me in giving Thyself to me, and because the love wherewith Thou dost bestow the gift, increases its value a thousand-fold, and renders it a million times more precious in my eyes. The love of the young mother suckling her first-born son, is as nothing to the love wherewith Thou givest Thyself to us, and her heart yearns far less tenderly over the beloved fruit of her womb, than does Thy Sacred Heart over the sinful soul, which Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood.

O Mary, Mother of fair love, thou whose pure immaculate heart alone is worthy to offer unto the most lovely, and most loving God of the most Holy Eucharist, a worthy tribute of gratitude and love; behold my weakness, my inability, and yet graciously behold also the immense desire of my heart, worthily to love your Jesus. Suffer, I implore thee, suffer one single spark of that heavenly flame which burns in *thine*, to brighten *my* poor heart; or, rather, take it, take my heart, so poor

and so ungrateful, hide it in thine own, that its acts of thanksgiving and love may henceforth come to Jesus only through the medium of thy pure and loving heart. Cover it, O my Mother, cover the poverty of thy poor child, with thine own rich royal mantle, and in closest union with thee, may she love Jesus for ever in time and throughout eternity. Amen.

**PRAVERS AND MEDITATIONS**

**FOR THE**

**PROCESSION ON THE FEAST OF  
CORPUS CHRISTI.**



PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS FOR THE  
PROCESSION ON THE FEAST OF  
CORPUS CHRISTI.

*Reflections before the Procession begins.*

The Church, in the holy ardour of her zeal for the glory of her Heavenly Spouse, and in her anxiety to testify her gratitude to Him for conferring upon her the inestimable gift of His Most Holy Eucharist, is not contented with rendering Him due honour in the procession on Holy Thursday; for many sad thoughts and mournful recollections are mingled with the joys of that ever-blessed day, and the sacred sorrows of the Passion rushing with rapid waves into the bosom of the Spouse of Christ, compel her soon to lay aside her songs of joy, and to pour out the lamentations and tears which issue freely from her afflicted heart. And if, in the festival of Holy Thursday, the love of her Divine Spouse is set before her in its highest and most affecting colours, yet is His approaching Death still more strongly impressed upon her, and the dark shadows of that sad day which is fast and surely approaching, already darken her rejoicing, and enshroud her in a robe of mourning and woe.

The gratitude of the Church demanded then a time specially set apart and consecrated to the praise and honour of the wondrous love of her

Heavenly Spouse, in His institution of the adorable Eucharist. And for this purpose she has established the Feast of Corpus Christi, and the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament, and during these eight days, she calls her children continually to her altars, and enjoins them to render solemn homage and adoration to the God of love, whose delights are to dwell with the children of men.

But Jesus, the Divine Spouse of the Church, is also a King. He is Conqueror of death and hell, and the pious zeal of His Spouse decrees Him all the honours of a triumph. She remembers the cruel mockery inflicted upon Jesus in the Prætorium, the thorny crown which was then bestowed upon her Lord and King, and in the devices of her ingenious tenderness, she bestows upon Him a crown of glory for that crown of thorns, the homage of the heart for the derisive homage of the Jews; and now she decrees that every head shall bow, and every knee shall bend in humblest adoration before Him, whom she carries in triumphant procession throughout the whole Catholic world. She calls upon every mouth to utter praises and benedictions to His beloved name, and all hearts to throb with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and love.

The fathers of the holy Council of Trent, explaining the intentions of the Church in this institution of the procession of Corpus Christi, show at the same time with great clearness and accuracy, the dispositions of mind and heart with which we should accompany these sacred ceremonies. After observing that it was very proper to establish certain days upon which the faithful

might unite in giving their universal testimony of the gratitude of their hearts to their common master for the inestimable gift of His most Holy Eucharist, and might at the same time make a visible representation of the victory that He gained, and the triumph which He so richly merited by His Death, they add, that it should be performed in such a manner as to cause the truth to triumph over falsehood and heresy: in order that the enemies of that divine mystery, being struck with amazement at the pomp and splendour of our ceremonies, should no longer dare to attack that heavenly mystery, but that being ashamed and confounded by their past blindness and errors, they may be led to renounce their heresies, and to claim a part in the joy which is so evidently manifested by the faithful, upon these days of gladness and thanksgiving.

Therefore, as it plainly appears, that the intention of our mother, the Church, in this institution of the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, was to decree the honour of a triumph to her Heavenly Spouse, let us strive to enter into those feelings of joy which are suitable to such a glorious feast, let us remember that He who triumphs is our beloved Jesus. He is the King of the festival, as He is King of our hearts; for Him the censers swing, and the flowers bestrew our streets: those brilliant *repositoires* or resting-places, which are raised at certain distances from each other, along the road which He is about to traverse, are the thrones which we prepare for His Sovereign Majesty; these little children crowned with flowers, these virgins clothed in vestal white that follow in the steps of



our spotless Lamb, these hymns of joy, these chants of praise are all directed to the glory of His holy name, they fill our hearts with joy in His glory, and lead our thoughts far above this world to think of the eternal joys and praises of our heavenly home, of the eternal glorious triumph of our conquering Lord and King.

In the third chapter of the Song of Solomon, we read, that that wise and mighty king, desiring to display his magnificence and splendour, and to win the respect and admiration of his people, caused his armoury workmen to construct for him a chariot of cedar-wood—he made the pillars thereof of silver, and the bottom of gold, the covering was of the finest purple, and the midst of it was filled with all that was most lovely and beautiful for the daughters of Sion, who went forth to behold King Solomon, whilst sixty warriors, chosen from amongst the most valiant soldiers of Israel, surrounded the triumphal chariot of their king.

And is not this an admirable, though mysterious figure of Jesus in His Most Holy Eucharist? This chariot represents the Saviour's holy humanity; the wood of the cedars of Lebanon is figurative of the incorruptible nature of His holy Body: the pillars of silver typify the purity of His virginal flesh: the pure gold, the Divinity which was united to His holy humanity: the purple is the symbol of His Royalty, the royalty which appertains to Him not only by the right of His Eternal Generation, but which He has bought with the price of His own Blood. But what image or figure could depict Jesus more naturally and

distinctly than Love, symbolized as it is in the text referred to, by *all beautiful and lovely things*: and if, as St. John sublimely expresses it, *God is love*, where is He so full of love as in His Eucharist? Yes, the holy Eucharist is indeed that triumphal chariot in which the true Solomon appears to His delighted people, in all the splendour of His radiant beauty, in all the tenderness of His infinite love: there will His heavenly charms melt and subdue the hearts of the daughters of Sion, of all pure and gentle souls: there do His virgins spread upon the steps of His throne most rich and precious carpets, the work of their own hands, or rather, they bring to His Feet their pure and innocent hearts, adorned with all those virtues which are most pleasing to Him, and which they learn of Him in the most holy Eucharist. And is it not around this throne, where sits in royal state the God of love, that the chosen warriors of the armies of the Lord, press with loyal love and fervent zeal?

These bishops, these venerable priests, whose eyes are ever watchful in the service of their God, these vigilant sentinels, these courageous, faithful soldiers, who grow old in His service, and die at their appointed post, fastening their failing eyes upon their beloved standard, the Cross, and heaving their last sigh of love for the most holy Eucharist, are they not the standard-bearers of His train?

Let us follow, then, the steps of our triumphant King, let us surround the chariot of the divine Conqueror of souls, for are we not His ransomed people, redeemed by His sufferings and death?

Yes, we are the conquest of His love, the price of His Blood: He has overcome our enemies, He has triumphed over them for our sakes; let us then raise our eyes with love and gratitude to the Cross which leads the procession on, for is it not the Standard of the King, the Banner which He has bathed in His own Blood? It precedes Him, for by it He overcame, by the Cross He rules the world, "the Lord reigneth from the Tree." Let us look at it with love, and let us not turn our eyes away from it, save to repose them upon the brilliant throne of the most holy Eucharist. Let us gaze upon our Lord in His Sacrament of Love, for to-day He shines in all His splendour, He darts His life-giving rays over the whole world. It is the Feast of Love: let it be also the feast-day of our hearts. Let us sing the greatness of our heavenly King, let us chant His praises, and let us cause the incense of our joyful thanksgiving and the hymn of our love to mount to the highest heaven.

#### PRAYER DURING THE PROCESSION:

##### *A Paraphrase of the LXVIIIth Psalm.*

"Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, let them also that hate Him flee before Him. Like the smoke vanisheth, as the wax melteth before the flame, so let the ungodly perish before the face of the Lord."

See God arise, His foemen fly,  
His haters shrink beneath His eye;  
As smoke-wreaths melt in empty sky,  
Thou scatterest them abroad.

As wax before the scorching flame  
Decay the men of lawless aim,  
No remnant leaving, and no name,  
Before the mighty God.

Arise, O my Jesus, my Saviour and my King,  
issue from Thy sanctuary, appear in the midst of  
Thy people, come to receive their homage and  
adoration: turn not Thy face away from their  
eager gratitude, from their transports of love,  
appear, arise, and let Thine enemies fly before  
Thee, let faithful hearts alone surround Thy tri-  
umphal car: let those unhappy ones, whose hearts  
neither know Thee nor love Thee, flee away and  
hide from before Thy face; for this is the day of  
Thy glory, the day of the triumph of love: let the  
ungodly flee and be consumed, or rather, let the  
power of Thy grace soften the hardness of their  
hearts: let the ardour of Thy charity melt their  
frozen souls, and let their voices be united to ours  
to sing Thy mercy and proclaim Thy praise.

“Let the just rejoice in the Presence of the  
Lord, let them rejoice before God exceedingly.  
Sing unto God, sing praises to His Name, prepare  
the way for Him that cometh in the deserts. Re-  
joice in His holy name, let the heart of them  
rejoice that seek the Lord, for He is the Father  
of the fatherless and the Judge of the widows,  
He is King in His most holy sanctuary.”

Then shall the just before their King,  
With beaming eye for gladness spring:  
Sing to our God, in triumph sing,  
And chant the Name adored.

Cast up His way, prepare it well,  
Who rides in might o'er wastes and fell:  
In JAH, His Name unchangeable,  
Exult before the Lord.

Thou art with us, O my Jesus, Thou walkest in the midst of us, and shall not our hearts leap with joy in Thy Presence? What more can they desire in heaven or earth? Art Thou not the Eternal Glory of the Father, the joy of angels, the happiness of the elect? Thou art also our Joy, O most amiable and lovely Saviour, and in Thy Presence we poor exiles of earth enjoy a foretaste of the joys and pleasures of our heavenly home. Sing unto God, sing praises unto Jesus, all you little children who come before Him in the robe of innocence which He loves; swing before Him your sweet burning censers, scatter under His feet the flowers which are fair and sweet as yourselves: and you too, young virgins, who surround the throne of His love, sing the praises of your adorable Spouse: offer Him the sweet perfume of your prayers, let it ascend to His throne, and let your affections of tender gratitude and love be laid at His feet like the fragrant flowers, which the hands of little children scatter on His way. And let us all repeat in one harmonious chorus of love and praise, Glory and love be to the God who hath set up His tabernacle in the midst of us, who has become our guide to lead us through the wilderness, the wilderness of life. Glory and love to our heavenly Father who will not leave His children orphans; let us for ever bless His goodness and mercy, for He is far more loving than any earthly father. His hand feeds us with the Bread

of angels, and His delights are to dwell in the midst of us, to give Himself to us, to abide with us for ever.

“God bringeth back the exiles into their own country, He setteth the captives free, and bringeth them into a land of abundance, but the rebellious and ungodly are driven into a dry and thirsty land.”

The Father of the orphaned heart,  
The Avenger of the widow's part,  
In Thy most holy place Thou art,  
Thou God of heaven on high.

God gives the lonely home and rest,  
To walk at large ; He frees the oppress'd,  
They only dwell in drought unblest  
Who His great power defy.

Thou, O my Jesus, hast broken our bonds, and burst asunder the fetters that bound us : Thou didst blot out in Thine own Blood the schedule of condemnation, which was written against us : Thou by Thy Death hast opened to us the gates of heaven, our eternal home. We are Thy freed men, O my Jesus, we are the happy captives whom Thou hast restored to liberty and life ; Thy Cross has broken our fetters, and has overthrown the power of the tyrant who had dominion over us. We are now, O sweetest Saviour, the happy captives of Thy love, we love Thee, and we bless the sceptre which Thou dost extend to us. The land to which Thou dost conduct us, is indeed a land of plenty, flowing with milk and honey. Thy holy Eucharist is to us a fountain of ever new delight. It is the Bread which nourishes and

strengthens us, the water which quenches our thirst, the Life by which we live; and the unbelievers who mock at our faith, who insult this adorable mystery, shall be punished by Thy Almighty Hand, they shall be driven into waste places where no water is, their souls faint and perish for want of the water of life.

“O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou wentest through the wilderness, the earth shook, and the heavens dropped waters, Sinai trembled and bowed down at the sight of the Lord, the God of Israel! Thou, O God, didst send a gracious rain, and dew upon Thy people, to strengthen and sustain them when they were weary; Thy congregation dwelt therein, and Thy people dwelt in peace, Thy goodness prepared food for Thy children in their need.”

Lord, Thou didst go before Thine own,  
Thy stately steps the region drear  
Beheld: the earth did quake and groan,  
The watery heavens were bowed with fear;  
Heaven bowed, earth trembled; thro' the sky  
A few dark shower-drops stole abroad;  
Yon Sinai towering lone and high,  
Bow'd down at sight of Israel's God.

Upon Thy chosen heritage  
Thou wastest, Lord, Thy gracious rain,  
And, worn with many a weary stage,  
'Twas Thine to cheer them and sustain.  
Thine everlasting Host was there,  
And safe within the guarded round  
Thy people dwelt; celestial fare  
For Thy forlorn Thy goodness found.

And what, O my Saviour, are all the wonders which Thou didst perform by Thine Almighty power, for Thy chosen people Israel, compared to those which Thou hast worked for us, who are indeed Thy chosen people, the people of kings whom Thy right hand hath blessed? It was by the law of fear and trembling that Thou didst reign over the children of Jacob, and it was from the midst of the mount that burned with fire, with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, that Thou didst make Thy voice heard to Thy chosen people Israel. But it is by the law of love that Thou dost reign over us, it is by mercy that Thou dost now manifest Thyself to Thy Church, it is in the calm stillness of silent prayer, that Thou dost make Thy voice heard by us. The soft rain which Thou dost shed upon us, is the refreshing dew of Thy grace, and the bread which feeds us, is indeed the bread of heaven, the bread of life and immortality. Hast Thou not said, O my Jesus: "Your fathers have eaten manna and are dead, but he that eateth of the bread that I will give you, shall live for ever?" Thanks and praise be rendered to Thee, my God, for that sacred Bread which Thou didst keep for Thy children. Thanks, O God of love, for this most excellent gift of Thine infinite love! It is indeed the Bread which revives our exhausted strength, which supports us in our weakness, which is our joy, our hope, and our life.

"The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power. Kings of armies did flee, did flee, and the virgins that tarried at home divided the spoils."



The Lord, the Almighty breathes the strain,  
And high the tuneful tidings swell :  
Lo! chanting loud in solemn strain,  
Ten thousand maids of Israel !  
Where are the kings of mighty hosts ?  
Fled far away, fled far and wide,  
Their triumph and their trophied boasts,  
The damsels in their bowers divide.

It is not alone Thy virgins that sing the praises of Thy victories, O my beloved Saviour, the universal Church lifts up her voice to praise and bless Thy name, and in this joyful day she celebrates Thy praises throughout the world, which echoes with the songs of love surrounding Thy triumphal car. She salutes Thee, King of kings, Conqueror of death and hell, for the powers of hell are vanquished by Thee, and Thou hast broken the iron sceptre of their sway. The kings, the gods of the nations, have vanished before Thy face, their kingdoms are become the kingdoms of the Lord's anointed, Thy cross is raised in triumph over their ancient temples, Thy blood has purified their altars, and Thy tabernacle has replaced their cast down thrones. Glory to the conqueror of death and hell ! Glory, praise, and love to the God whose triumphs are triumphs of love, who conquers only that He may confer benefits on the conquered.

“ When Thou shalt repose beside the sheep-folds, thou shalt be like a dove with silver wings and pinions of bright gold. When the Almighty scattered kings for her, then she was white as snow in Selmon. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why are ye proud, ye high hills? This is the

hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will abide in it for ever."

If calm ye rest, the troughs between,  
The folds beside—a dove behold,  
Her plumes inlaid with silver sheen,  
Her pinions of the pale pure gold.  
What time, the chosen of His love,  
By thee, the Almighty scattered kings,  
Like snow in Selmon, gentle dove,  
Against the dark heaven glanced thy wings.

Lo, Bashan's hill, a hill of God,  
A towering mount is Bashan's hill.  
Why, ye embattled mountains proud,  
Look envious here? ye know His will.  
Behold the mountain of the Lord,  
His own, where He vouchsafes to be,  
The tabernacle, where adored  
He dwells in His eternity.

Thy Church, O my Jesus, is the silver dove of which the prophet speaks, which reposes in Thy chosen heritage; and she has indeed good cause to bless Thee, and to proclaim her gratitude in songs of joy, the Church whom Thou hast purified in Thy blood, rendering her whiter than snow in Selmon, and crowning her with the double crown of innocence and charity; Thou didst sustain her in the day of battle, O my God; in vain did the kings of the earth take up arms against her, in vain did they steep their swords in the blood of her saints, for Thou hast bestowed upon Thy Church the gift of immortality, and the blood which she shed so freely in Thy cause, has become the fountain of her perpetual fecundity and life;

Thou hast breathed upon Thine enemies, and they have vanished away, as the wax melteth in the rays of the scorching midday sun. In vain, O my Saviour, have the kings of mighty hosts arisen against Thy Church, even the leaders of heresy, schism, and infidelity, in vain have they insulted and despised Thy chosen heritage; He dwells in heaven who laughs them all to scorn, and His Church shall triumph gloriously over all her enemies, and, leaning on Thine Almighty arm, shall pass calmly on through the succeeding ages of the world, ever pure, holy, full of life and fertility, and full of joyful confidence in Him who is her strength, and who will abide with her always, even to the consummation of the world.

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, and the Lord is in the midst of them, as in Sinai, as in the sanctuary. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, who believe not that the Lord God dwelleth among them.”

The chariots of Jehovah's train

Are twenty thousand : angels bright,

By thousands told, and told again,

God is among them in His might ;

In might and terror : silent waits

All Sinai, in the Holy Place.

Thou art gone up on high—thy gates

Thrown wide to thy enthralled race.

Thou hast ascended up on high,

And captive led captivity,

And Thou hast searched Thy stores above

For gifts of Thy redeeming love.

Triumphal gifts for mortal man,  
Here in his short and sinful span,  
That rebel's heart should be the abode  
Of Israel's Lord, the mighty God.

The glorious choirs of angels are pressing eagerly around the throne of Thy love, O my Jesus, they behold Thee, they contemplate Thy glory, they drink deep draughts of the fountain of life and immortality. And yet, O my God, in all the ecstasy of their eternal happiness, they must envy us the gift of the Holy Eucharist; it seems that Thou hast loved us more than Thou hast loved them. It was not for them, but for us, that Thou didst shed Thy blood on Calvary. It was not for them, but for our sakes, that the God of heaven came down to dwell upon earth; and if Thou dost sustain Thy holy angels with the food of love and happiness, Thou dost feed us, Thy children, with Thine own substance! Why then, O my God, cannot we love Thee as they love Thee? Oh, lend us a portion of your love, sweet dwellers in our heavenly home, kind invisible brothers who come amongst us to adore the God whom you adore in heaven; or, rather supply our deficiencies, love Him and bless Him for us, for we can only stammer out His praises with a faint and feeble tongue.

But we have in heaven, O my Jesus, many other brethren who praise and love Thy name. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; they are, in a manner, obliged to bless Thee and to love Thee for us. When Thou hadst conquered death and hell, O my adorable Saviour, when

Thou didst enter into Thy kingdom, Thou didst bring with Thee an innumerable host of captives, whose fetters and bonds Thou hadst broken and destroyed; then Thou didst open wide the gates of heaven, and daily are new subjects brought to Thy sacred feet, daily do they enter there, bearing in their hands the palm of victory, and receiving from Thine that glorious crown, which they owe not to their own merits, but to Thy grace, O my Lord. And more than this, my Saviour, in heaven, as in the Holy Eucharist, Thou art our Mediator, Thou dost ever make intercession for us, Thou dost display Thy glorious wounds, Thou dost cause them to speak in our favour, in the presence of Thy Father in heaven; and here on earth Thou dost offer Thyself upon the altar, and Priest and Victim combined, Thou dost offer Thy blood as a satisfaction for our sins, and a full acquittance of all the debts we owe to the sovereign justice of Thy Father. Thou dost offer Thy precious blood even for those ungrateful ones who believe not in Thy love, and who deny Thy real presence in this august mystery. Have pity upon them, O most sweet Saviour, touch their hearts, gently constrain them to love Thee, or, at least, join all the love which they refuse to give Thee, to that which we would fain offer to Thee as the humble tribute of our hearts.

“Thy people have seen Thy goings, O my God, they have seen the goings of my God, my King, towards His sanctuary. The singers go before, the players upon instruments follow after, in the midst are the virgins, playing upon their timbrels, and they sing with one accord, ‘Bless ye the Lord

in the congregations, bless the Lord, from the fountains of Israel.' "

Well seen are all Thy goings, Lord,  
Thy ways of perfect grace,  
The goings of my God, my King,  
In His own holy place.

The singers lead the choral march,  
The minstrels close the train,  
The virgins' timbrels all around,  
Guide soft th' harmonious strain.

In solemn meetings praise the Lord,  
The Lord, in warbled lays,  
Ye who from Israel's fountain flow,  
The God of all our praise.

Thy people have seen Thy solemn procession, O my God, they have beheld Thy progress through the streets of our cities, they have seen Thee repose by the way side, and at the gates of their dwellings, to receive the loving welcome they had prepared for Thee. They have seen Thee bestow Thy blessing upon the kneeling crowd, blessing rich and poor, old and young, weak and strong, opening Thy Heart to bestow love upon every one, to shed grace and benefits upon all the kneeling multitude.

This day has been a day of joy and happiness unto Thee, O my God, for earth has resembled heaven, and as we have contemplated Thee, surrounded thus with all the pomp and ceremonial of Catholic worship, escorted by Thy holy priests, borne aloft by one of them, and as it were, resting upon his heart, preceded by little children, and

followed by young virgins, it has appeared to us like a dream of heaven, and as our hearts and tongues joined in the universal song of praise to the God of our salvation, as we cried, "Hosanna, Blessed be He that cometh," we lifted longing eyes to our celestial country, where He dwells unveiled, in glorious might eternally.

"Thy God hath strengthened thy power, O Israel. Confirm, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us, for Thy temple's sake at Jerusalem shall the kings of the earth bring presents unto Thee. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth, O sing praises unto the Lord, to Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, His glory is over Israel, and His might is in the clouds. The God of Israel giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God....."

Lord, in our cause make sure and strong  
Thy word and gracious will,  
Thou Watcher of Jerusalem  
From Thy most holy hill.

Far Moriah's clime makes haste to spread  
Her suppliant hands abroad :  
Sing to the Lord, ye thrones of earth,  
Sing praises to our God :

Ascribe ye power to God above,  
His glory ever bright  
Is over Israel, in the clouds  
His high enduring might.

O awful in Thy darksome shrine !  
'Tis Israel's God who gives  
Might to His own, and deeds of war ;  
For ever blest He lives !

O Jesus, Prince of Peace, King of eternal ages, strengthen, we pray Thee, Thy power in the midst of Thy people: confirm the works of Thy right Hand, extend Thy kingdom into all lands, multiply the conquests of Thy love, bind all hearts fast to Thyself with the chains of love. Draw to Thee all peoples and kings, let them come to lay at Thy feet the tribute of their gratitude and love, let this be indeed a day of triumph and victory to Thee, O God of the most holy Eucharist, let Thy adorable Heart kindle upon the earth which Thou dost even now so gloriously traverse, that sacred fire wherewith Thine own Heart is enkindled; that the souls of men may be inflamed with that most sacred love, that the most rebellious may be subdued and conquered by Thy great love in the most holy Eucharist, and may be enchained for ever by the bonds of Thy love. As for us, O my God, we bless the bonds which attach us to Thee, they are our glory and our happiness, and we desire to be ever more the happy captives of the great God who stoops so low to us, of the good God, whose tabernacle is in the midst of us: for ever will we love Thee, for ever will we bless Thy Name, and repeat in unison with every throb of our hearts, love, eternal love to Jesus in His most holy Eucharist, love unbounded, and immeasurable in time, endless love throughout eternity. Amen.



## PRAYER OR PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XXII.

*For the Procession of the Octave of Corpus Christi.*

“The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore shall I want nothing. He causeth me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

Thou art our Shepherd, O sweet Jesus, and Thou art even now proceeding through the ranks of Thy people, and gathering around Thee Thy faithful sheep. Ah! how good, how kind is our Jesus! How amiable is the God who listens to our humble prayers, who never rejects our reverential homage of gratitude and love. How good is the God who calls to Himself all the poor and weak, Who suffers children and men alike to press around Him, and gaze upon Him with loving devotion, as a man gazeth upon the face of his friend! What could we want, when we have Thee, O good and most beloved Shepherd? Art Thou not the Fountain of all good? Thy love has created us, Thy Hand has been stretched out over us, has protected us ever since we first lay upon our mother's bosom. Thy arms were open to receive us upon our first entrance into the world. Thou didst wash our souls in the life-giving waters of baptism, and Thou didst lead us into the green and fertile pastures of Thy Church, where all our needs are abundantly supplied. We are the sheep of Thine heritage, O Lord, the flock of Thy pasture; Thou art our Shepherd, and with holy joy and sacred pride we may exclaim, O, how rich is

my inheritance, how glorious are the gifts of my God ! For Thou art our inheritance, O our adorable Jesus, Thou art our possession, our property, our treasure, Thy Heart is open to us, and from its fountains we drink of the living water which springeth up unto eternal life.

“He restoreth strength to my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of justice for His Name’s sake.”

My ingratitude has not yet wearied out Thy tenderness, O good and loving Shepherd. How often have I wandered from Thy sheepfold in search of peace and happiness, which I could never find save in Thy sacred Presence ! But Thy mercy was greater than my sin, and instead of forsaking Thine ungrateful sheep, Thou didst pursue me with Thine untiring grace and love ; and when I listened to Thy voice and obeyed Thy call, my soul was wounded, covered with sores, weakened and defiled by sin, and Thou didst pity my lost condition, Thou didst heal all my wounds, and to restore my wasted strength, Thou didst invite me to sit down at Thy table, Thou didst inebriate me with Thy delicious wine, and then, with gracious condescension to my weakness, Thou didst lead me by the hand in that new path of life which Thou directest me to walk in, and taking away the thorns which strewed my way, Thou didst cover it thickly with flowers, the flowers of humility and hope. And if in after days, O my God, the barren ground of my soul produces fruit to the glory of Thy name, it will be the produce of Thy grace alone, and all the glory will be Thine : and even now, I confess, O my God, that there is nothing in me but sin, and misery, and

nothingness, that I am not able to do any good thing.

Thou alone, O my God, canst produce good out of this nothingness : Thou alone canst enrich my poverty, and incline to good, the will which is naturally inclined to evil only.

“ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

How sweet are these words to my heart, O my Jesus, how I love to repeat them, for they are the faithful expression of my own feelings, and of my confidence in Thee. What can I fear, O my beloved Saviour, when Thou art with me ? What danger can I fear when I walk, supported by Thy Hand, when my heart rests and reposes upon Thine ? No, I will fear nothing. I will neither dread the world with all its seductions, nor hell with its artifices and snares. Thou hast triumphed *for me* over all these enemies, and Thou wilt again conquer them *in me*. I am weak but Thou art my Strength, and if of myself I can do nothing, yet can I do all things through Him that strengtheneth me. Yes, good and loving Shepherd, nothing shall henceforth shake my confidence in Thee. Thy mercies past, assure me of Thy mercies yet to come. Thy watchful Eye is ever upon me, Thy love is inexhaustible, and Thou canst not suffer me to be lost, when Thou hast loved me and given Thyself for me. With Thee, O my Jesus, with Thy Most Holy Eucharist, I fear neither poverty, nor sorrow, for Thou art my treasure and my consolation. I fear no persecution, because Thou wilt be my protector ; nor

hunger nor thirst, for Thou art my food and my drink; nor infirmity nor death, for Thou art my Life, and none of these things can separate Me from Thee; even death itself, I sweetly feel, will separate me from all beside, but it will unite me to Thee in a blissful eternity.

“Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”

Thy Cross, O my Jesus, is at once the crook to console, and the rod to strengthen me; when the griefs and sorrows of life oppress my heart, when it sinks beneath the weight of affliction, one look to Thy Cross revives my strength, and restores my peace and resignation. Thy Cross, recalling to my mind all that Thou hast done and suffered for me, reminds me also of the heaven which Thou didst purchase for me by Thy sufferings and tears; it tells me, that if I would reign with Thee, I must also suffer with Thee, and that the reward of the trials and sufferings which I undergo for a few short days, will be an immense and eternal weight of glory. And then, O my Jesus, when the tempest roars around me, when the powers of the enemy surround my soul, and encompass me on every side, then do I lean upon Thy guiding staff, and with Thine aid I am invincible, I gain a glorious victory by Thy help over the devil, the world, and my own sinful self. And often, also, O my Saviour, does Thy Cross become the rod to strike me gently when I stray from Thee, the crook to arrest my wandering steps, to arouse me from the sleep of lukewarmness. And these Thy chastisements also console me, because they are another proof of Thy love and mercy: and if Thy Hand corrects me, O most loving Shepherd, it

also tenderly wipes away the tears which repentance and grief draw from my eyes.

“Thou preparest a table for me, in the presence of them that persecute me.”

These words of the Prophet-King are also most appropriate to my own case, O my Lord, for am I not permitted to sit down at that Feast of Love which Thou hast prepared in the midst of Thy Church: nay, hast Thou not Thyself prepared it for me? And on that thrice blessed day when Thou didst confer that most precious Treasure upon Thy Church, was it not for me that Thou didst prepare it, O my Jesus? did not Thy loving Eye rest upon me also, and distinguish me amidst the clouds which overhung futurity? Yes, unworthy as I am, I was present to Thy thought, my Lord, Thy Heart loved me and accepted me. It foresaw the little drop of love that my poor heart would one day mingle with the boundless, unfathomable ocean of Thy wondrous love; Thou knewest the place I should occupy at the sacred banquet, and now Thou makest me sit down in the presence of them that persecute me, in the presence of the world and the devil, who desire my eternal perdition, and howl with rage when they discern that the Bread wherewith Thou dost feed me is the light which guides me safely between the snares and pitfalls wherewith they besiege my path, and that it is the strength by which I gain a complete victory over their malice and furious attacks.

“Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.”

What is this perfumed oil which Thou pourest

upon my head, O my Saviour? Is it not the sweetness with which Thou dost inebriate my soul at Thy holy Feast of love? Is not my soul indeed filled with heavenly sweetness, with celestial odours, when I receive Thee, O my Jesus, when Thou dwellest in me, when my soul becomes Thy tabernacle, and possessing Thee can truly say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His?" The fragrant smell of this heavenly perfume brings peace and happiness on its wings, it wafts us away from earth, and if the heart can comprehend, O my Jesus, the joys of this Chalice of love, if it can taste its unspeakable sweetness, yet is it powerless to express it, the tongue of man cannot utter the things of Thy love, it is mute, for earth has no words into which to translate that heavenly language which Thou dost speak to the soul in Thy Most Holy Eucharist.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

I trust, O divine and adorable Shepherd, that Thy mercy will indeed follow me to the end; yes, it will follow me all the days of my life, it will hover over me like a cooling cloud, a shadow from the heat, it will clothe me like a vestment, it will be my light in time of darkness, my strength in weakness, my safety in time of danger, for the Holy Eucharist is my heritage, my Treasure: it is my possession and my chief good, and is it not also mercy itself?

Yes, O my Jesus, Thou wilt be my mercy each day of my life, do Thou also sanctify me daily by Thy adorable Presence, grant me daily the happi-

ness of possessing Thee, and when the end arrives, when the last day of my life begins, when my last hour on earth is fast fleeting away, then also come, Good Shepherd, come to lay Thy poor sheep to rest upon Thy Heart, come to rejoice my eyes once more with the divine rays of the Sun of the Most Holy Eucharist, let me breathe my last sigh upon Thy bosom, let that last sigh be also my last earthly act of love to Thee, and finally, may Thy beloved Hand open to me when I leave this world, the door of my eternal home. Amen.

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PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

I come to Thee, O my Jesus! my soul is athirst for Thee, it seeks Thee, it ardently desires to be united to Thee, Who art its light, its joy, and its life. Thou callest to Thee, O my Jesus, the poor and the weak, and Thou dost therefore call me, Thou callest me to enrich my poverty, and to strengthen my weakness. I come Lord, I obey Thy call, but I entreat Thee to prepare my soul to receive Thee, to make it a fitting sanctuary for its heavenly Guest; purify it from all that can offend Thee, and render it by Thy grace less unworthy of the honour Thou dost deign to confer.

When I am prepared to receive Thee, O my Jesus, earth ought to vanish from my sight, I ought to behold Thee alone, to desire only Thee, to love only Thee; but so great is my weakness that the voices of the world, thoughts of earthly joys and sorrows, or temporal anxieties, follow me

even to the steps of the altar, and trouble and distract my soul. Deliver me from these vain thoughts, O my God, blot out all the worldly feelings and distressing anxieties that occupy my mind, speak, and there shall be made a deep silence in my soul; raise me above the dominion of my senses, raise me above myself, that my soul may enjoy without hindrance the blessedness of Thy heavenly presence. Withdraw for one short instant the veils which conceal Thee from us in this sacrament of Thy love, that I may know and love Thee as I ought.

Enlighten me, that I may know Thy greatness, Thy holiness, and Thine infinite perfections, O Thou who art the Light of the world, the splendour of the Father, the Eternal Sun of Justice! Thou O Jesus, art also the truth for which I thirst, and without Thy light all is darkness, deceit, and obscurity to me, and I can do nought but wander blindly, and sink lower and ever lower, a prey to the error which leadeth to the pit of destruction. Shine then in my soul, O Light Divine! Enlightened by Thee I shall see clearly the vanity of all earthly things, the nothingness of creatures, and my heart will cling to them no more; it will attach itself to Thee alone as its sole true good, the Good, sovereign, immutable, eternal.

Too long, O Lord, have I been of the number of those who walk not by Thy light, I have even dreaded it, and closed mine eyes that I might not behold it. I have avoided Thy presence, as if it were possible for man to escape Thine all pervading Eye. Alas, we may close our eyes to shut



out the light of the sun, but it does not therefore cease to flood the earth with its reviving and gladdening beams ; and so it is with Thee, Divine Sun of Wisdom, we may cease to see Thee, but we cannot escape from Thy penetrating glance, which searches the very inmost depths of our souls. Forget, O my adorable Saviour, my ingratitude and wandering from Thy fold ; forgive, and turn not away from me the light of Thy countenance. Shine, O Divine Sun of Justice, enlighten each day of my life with Thy heavenly beams, disperse the clouds of night, guide me through the shades of darkness which overshadow my path on earth, and may Thy glorious light guide my soul from the light of grace to that of glory, until she arrives at the brightness of eternal day.

But Thou art not alone the light with which I desire to be enlightened, O my Jesus ! Thou art also the Living Bread which came down from heaven, the Bread of Life by which I live, the Heavenly Manna which alone is able to sustain me amid the wilderness of this world, the delicious Food which my soul most earnestly desires. My soul hungers after Thee, my Jesus ; it hungers for Thee, who, in Thy wondrous love, wert not content even with suffering and giving Thy life for me, but Thou wouldst also nourish me with Thine own substance, that so I might have life in me, and might also have it more abundantly, a life which shall deposit in my body a germ of immortality, which shall survive its momentary destruction, and extend throughout the endless ages of eternity.

O Bread which came down from heaven ! my treasure, my happiness, what can he who lives by Thee want any more on earth ? Dost Thou not contain all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ? I desire Thee, O my Jesus, more ardently than the thirsty hart sighs for the cool refreshing water brooks, come then and quench my burning thirst, come into my soul, communicate to me Thy spirit, Thy strength, and Thy life ; heal all my infirmities, all my weaknesses, and cause me to participate in Thy holiness.

I adore Thee, Bread of Angels, who dost also deign to become the Bread of us poor wanderers upon earth ; I adore Thee, O Jesus, who dost give life unto the world, refuse not Thyself to my ardent desire, hasten to come to me, for without Thee my soul faints and fails ; purify my soul, adorn it with all those gifts which are pleasing in Thy sight, for it has nothing of its own, it can do nothing by itself, and its utter indigence is its sole title to Thine abounding mercy. Yes, O my Saviour, I am poor indeed, but Thou art my treasure, Thy merits are mine, Thou wilt now apply them to me over again in this adorable sacrament, and it is with full trust and confidence in them alone that I venture to approach Thy altar, trusting not in my own merits, but in Thine, O my adorable Lord, my Sovereign Good, the only object of my hope and love.

O Mary, most pure virgin, thou who didst give Jesus to this world of sinners, who wert His first and also His most glorious tabernacle, thou who alone of all the human race hast been able to comprehend the grandeur and magnificence of

the gift which God has bestowed upon the world in His most holy Eucharist ; now that I am prepared to receive that heavenly gift, my soul turns to implore thy tender aid, listen to my prayer, help thy poor unworthy child, offer to Jesus to supply all my deficiencies, thy humility, thy purity, thy love ; offer to Him all those virtues wherewith thy immaculate soul was adorned, and which caused it to be acceptable to Him, the place where He delighted to repose. Above all things, teach me to love Him, to imitate Him, to live in Him, and may He live in me eternally. Amen.

#### ACT OF THANKSGIVING AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

O happiness, O grace of which I am most utterly unworthy ! Thou, O my Jesus, now livest in me, Thy Heart, the Heart of my Saviour and my God, now throbs beside my own ! It is now Thy Blood which flows in my veins, Thy Spirit which animates my soul. It is Thyself, O my Lord, the glory and the joy of heaven, that the poorest and most unworthy of Thy creatures is permitted to possess and to enjoy.

May my whole being bless and praise Thee, O my adorable Saviour ; but, above all things, may it love Thee, and since I now possess the very source and fount of love, since Thou hast given me that Sacred Heart, which is the very focus and centre of the Divine fire which Thou didst come to enkindle upon earth, kindle that fire in my heart, O Lord ; burn, destroy in it, whatever is displeas-

ing to Thee, and may it, though too late, alas ! become the conquest and the happy victim of Thy love. Yes, my beloved Saviour, as Thou hast been the victim of Thy love for me, I desire now to become the victim of my love for Thee. Like Thine, let my sacrifice be irrevocable and complete ; I will keep back nothing ; the holocaust shall be made without reserve ; my will shall be subdued to Thine ; my heart desires to love Thee with unbounded, undivided love, and my body shall become Thy victim also, by penance and mortification.

O my Jesus, sweet and innocent victim of my sins, and of the sin of all mankind, accept the gift which I hereby make to Thee, of my whole being ; suffer me to immolate it in union with Thy sacrifice, grant that I may fill up in my own flesh that which is wanting in Thy sufferings, that my voice may join with Thine in offering a sacrifice of praise, and that my heart may be the altar upon which the homage of my love and adoration may ascend as a daily and nightly offering unto Thee.

I desire to die to all but Thee, O my Jesus, that I may live to Thee alone. Thou, O Lord, art the Fountain of Life, not alone of that temporal life which Thou dost bestow upon all beings that draw their breath, but of eternal life ; be Thou my life, give life to my soul, for without Thee it can produce none but fruits worthy of death.

I confess in bitterness of spirit, O my Jesus, that up to this present time I have not lived by Thee, my life has been natural, human ; I have followed the impulses of sense, and the prompt-

ings of my own will. Live, then, O my Jesus, live henceforth in me, cause me to live that supernatural life which is Thine own. Let Thy spirit enlighten and animate me; let it inflame me with love, let it transform me entirely into Thee.

But I well know, O Lord, that if I desire to live Thy life, I must do violence to myself, I must resist my natural inclinations, and follow Thee in the narrow way of self-renunciation and entire abnegation, for Thou art not only the life, but also the way in which we must walk if we desire to reach the end of our journey safely. What matters it, O my God, that the road is difficult, toilsome, and thickly scattered with thorns and briars? This toilsome way was trod by Thy bleeding feet, and the thorns which strew it were first bound on Thy most sacred brow. Too long have I wandered listlessly in the broad road in which the multitude rush madly on to destruction, enjoying the present pleasures of time without regard to the eternal interests of futurity. But, thanks to Thee, O Lord, my eyes are opened now. My heart acknowledges the vanity and nothingness of all earthly things. I will follow Thee in the narrow path, O my Saviour, cost me what it will, with a firm and unfaltering step. Sustain me in the narrow way, let me tread it safely, leaning on Thy cross. Draw me, and I will follow Thee with all Thine elect children, attract me with the sweet odour of Thy perfumes, for the charms and consolations of Thy love will reward me amply for all my sacrifices.

O Jesus, pure and unsullied way, way of equity, of truth, and love, which leads to heaven, Thou who wert sent into the world by Thy Father, to bring back sinners to the ways of justice and peace, have pity upon sinners, upon those sinners who have cost Thee so dear, and whom, notwithstanding their ingratitude, Thou lovest with such a tender burning love.

Go, then, O divine Saviour, to all those who refuse to come to Thee, visit them by the sweetness of Thy heavenly inspirations, by the strength of Thy grace, by the loving advances of Thy mercy; touch their hearts, enlighten them, and make them see and know that the way in which they are walking leadeth unto death, and that life and happiness are found in Thee alone. And, above all, cause them to comprehend, O Lord, that the love which Thou dost require at their hands is sweet and easy of attainment, that it gives wings to the soul, and raises it above all obstacles, that it may fly straight to the object of its love, to the end of all its desires, that it may obtain speedy possession of its Beloved. Tell these poor sinners, O my Jesus, tell them loudly and distinctly that this path, which seems to them so narrow, and so hard; becomes broad and easy when we tread in it with fidelity and courage, and that it leads to a boundless ocean of eternal and unspeakable joy and delight.

O Mary, mystic way by which Jesus came to us, we desire also to go to Him by thee; come then, O tender Mother, come and take the children of thine adoption by the hand, and lead

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them to the blessed Fruit of Thy most chaste womb. Led by thee, we shall be sure of a favourable reception from thy Son, He will accept the offered homage of our hearts and of our whole lives, He will fortify our weak uncertain will, He will bless us, and His blessing in time will be the pledge of the benediction which we hope to gain in eternity. Amen.

**MEDITATIONS**  
**UPON THE**  
**THREE FIRST WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST**  
**UPON THE CROSS,**  
**WHICH MAY BE USED UPON THE DAYS OF PERPETUAL**  
**ADORATION.**





## THE FIRST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

## I.

It is upon Calvary that the mercy of God and the malice of men appear in their most striking colours, for it was there that they strove together in mortal combat, and mercy triumphed by means of the torments and death of the Incarnate God. Let us then transport ourselves in spirit to that sacred mountain, and contemplate in stillness and silence, with deepest adoration, sorrow, and love, the sublime spectacle which is displayed to our astonished gaze.

The true Isaac mounts the sacred hill on which He is about to immolate Himself for our salvation. He ascends it, pale, tottering, exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood ; at length He reaches the appointed place, He lies down willingly upon the altar of sacrifice : but the angel that arrested the arm of the father of the faithful, and forbid him to slay his only son, does not interpose between the executioners and Jesus, for the justice of God requires the effusion of His Blood, which alone can make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. The act of Deicide is accomplished, the great nails are driven into His Feet and Hands, the executioners, mad with rage and hatred, stretch His adorable Body forcibly upon the wood of the

Cross, and rest their knees upon His Heart to maintain it in its position, contracted as it is with pain, and agitated by convulsive movements. O my God, how fearful are His sufferings! His veins are pierced and torn, His Blood gushes forth in streams over His executioners, His nerves are divided, His muscles stretched with agonizing tension, His joints are dislocated, at one moment His Blood rushes violently to the heart, causing Him intense anguish, and most fearful spasms; at another it flows back with increased impetus, through the wounds in His Hands and Feet, and Jesus seems ready to sink and die with overpowering faintness and exhaustion. But He will not purchase a brief immunity from pain by suffering Himself to sink into unconsciousness: He will drain the bitter cup of suffering to the very dregs for our sakes, and will not permit Himself to be cheated out of one brief instant of agony and woe.

The very thought of the agonies of crucifixion makes our souls shrink and die within us as it were: but if the sufferings of Jesus were so fearful during the time that He was being nailed to the Cross, what must they have been when the Cross was raised on high, and the whole weight of His Body hung from the wounds in His Feet and in His Hands! What agonizing, distracting pain must He not have endured, when the Cross was violently lifted up, and shaken roughly into the pit which had been dug in the ground to receive it! how must His tender frame have been racked and tortured with those horrible blows! And yet the sufferings of the Incarnate God excited no compassion for Him, save in the hearts of those few

faithful followers, who hailed with sighs and tears the exaltation of their crucified Lord. And even these testimonies of love and pity were drowned and hidden by the mocking, exulting cries of His furious enemies at the sufferings of their Victim. His heavenly sweetness, His patience and gentle charity, had no power to touch their savage hearts; they added fresh insults and mocking raillery to the taunts which they had already lavished upon Him, and they looked upon Him whom they had pierced, not with compunction and sorrow, but with scornful shaking of their heads, and words of cruel mockery. "If Thou art the Christ come down from the Cross, and all men will believe in Thee." "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

Thus fallen to the lowest depth of suffering and apparent shame, Jesus seemed alike insensible to the compassion of His friends, and to the cruel mockery of His exulting enemies: He was completely absorbed in suffering, He was reviled and despised, yet He opened not His mouth, but in silence accomplished His great work of love and mercy, bearing in silence each bitter word and insult, each new form of suffering which afflicted His holy humanity.

## II.

But the Cross was not only the Altar of Sacrifice upon which Jesus offered Himself for our salvation, it was also the pulpit from which He was to teach and preach to man: the tribunal to which He ascended to judge and to condemn their errors

and prejudices. His Heart had still many sweet words of instruction to bestow upon us, and His dying voice was now to teach all those who should hereafter become His disciples.

The Saviour raises His aching Head, His eyes, covered with a mournful cloud of mingled tears and blood, are lifted painfully to heaven, and His dying glance, still full of ineffable entreaty, plainly shows that the Heart of this patient, gentle Victim, is far less occupied with His own agonizing sufferings, than it is absorbed in continual intercourse with His Father in heaven. What then does the Heart of Jesus request of His God, in this supreme hour? What is the object of His last, most earnest prayer? Is He calling down the vengeance of His Father upon His cruel murderers? Does He ask Him to send down a legion of indignant angels, to rescue Him from the hands of His enemies, and inflict upon them the just punishment of their offences? Let us hear, He speaks, and the secret will be revealed.

My Father, He exclaims, My Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. O charity divine! O word of admirable sweetness, which would be in itself sufficient proof of the Divinity of Jesus, for who but a God could have conceived it at such a moment as this? What wonder would it have been if He had cursed those cruel men, and hurled anathemas at the heads of the ungrateful people who had refused to receive their Saviour and their King, who had rejected their long-promised, long-expected Messiah, not only refusing the heavenly gift of light and life which He came to bring, but heaping scorn and calumny and

insult upon His meek devoted Head, repaying all His kindness with shameful ingratitude, and nailing Him at length to the Tree of suffering? But no, no word of anger issues from His lips, He prays for them, He palliates their offences, He pleads for them to the Father, and implores Him to forgive them a crime, the enormity of which they did not fully understand.

And not only does He implore forgiveness for Peter who denied Him, for His apostles who with one exception had all forsaken Him and fled, but He asks it also for all those ungrateful ones upon whom He had heaped mercies and favours, and who yet had not been bold enough to utter a word in defence of His innocence. He asks it for Annas and Caiphas, the high priests, who had abused their authority to His injury when they should have used it for His protection. He asks it for Pilate, who could find no fault in Him, and acknowledged His innocence at the very moment of delivering Him up to be treated as the vilest criminal. He asks it for the Scribes, for the proud hypocritical Pharisees, who hated and insulted Him up to the last moment, and who still insult Him in His dying agony: for the cohort of Roman soldiers who scourged Him, and who platted a crown of thorns and put it upon His Head: for the blood-thirsty, furious crowd, who demanded His Death, crying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. He asks it also for the executioners, who pierced His Hands and His Feet, and cast lots for His vestments at the foot of the Cross.

Yes, it was for all these that Jesus cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what

they do." O how amazing is my Saviour's meekness, how infinite the mercy contained in His Sacred Heart! He does not only forgive them for the horrible crime which they have committed against Him, but He makes excuses for them, He builds a rampart around them with His love, to defend them from the justice of His Father, and He covers them safely with His prayer, and with that adorable Blood which has been shed by their hands, and which now streams freely over their garments, but in which He desires also to wash their souls!

And dost Thou, O my Jesus, excuse Thine enemies by saying that they know not what they do? But do they not know that they are putting the innocent to death? Did not even the unjust judge who pronounced Thy condemnation assure them that he found no fault, no cause of death in Thee? Did they not know that they were murdering a Prophet who had healed their sick, raised their dead to life, and delivered their possessed children from the tyranny of the evil one? Did they not know the utter falsity of the accusations that they had brought against Him, and that they had suborned false witnesses to utter lies to destroy Him? And had not Thy good works and the miracles which Thou hadst performed among them, declared to them in the clearest language that Thou wert the Messiah promised to their fathers, the Christ, the Son of the living God? And was not their blindness therefore inexcusable because it was voluntary and obstinate?

It is all true, my Saviour answers, they knew, alas, too well that they were doing wrong, but

they did not know the whole actual extent and enormity of the crime that they were committing : and this is the only excuse that I can urge to my Father in palliation of their crime ; and besides, guilty as they are, it is possible that they may yet repent ; the Heart which they have filled to overflowing with grief and sorrow, has never ceased to love them, and if I die by their hand, I die also for their sakes.

Who can have a doubt remaining of our Saviour's love and mercy, after such a proof as this ? Who can any longer refuse to hope, and to place his whole confidence in the infinitely merciful Heart of our Jesus ? No, let no one henceforth despair of obtaining the pardon of his sins ; however great, however numerous they may be, let us always remember that the dying prayer of Jesus on the cross, was uttered for us as well as them, for He prayed, not only for the men that actually crucified Him, or for the sinners who were living at the precise moment of His death, but for sinners of all ages and all times. It was then for us also that He demanded forgiveness from His Father ; it was our faults that He excused so tenderly ; let us then join our prayers with His, and with contrite and broken hearts let us embrace the cross, and humbly say to God : " I have sinned, O my Father, I am unworthy of Thy mercy ; but Jesus, my Saviour, has merited and implored it for me, and guilty though I be, I hope for pardon ; for the voice of His blood, and the voice of His Sacred Heart, are more powerful than the voice of my iniquities, in Thine ears."



## III.

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as the sacrifice of the cross; for the Victim daily offered upon our altars, is the same Victim in whose last agony the light of the sun was extinguished, and nature trembled to her very base; the blood which flows there is the same blood that flowed upon the pavement of the prætorium, which was shed in the streets of Jerusalem, and upon the Mount of Calvary. Upon the altar, indeed, Jesus suffers no more, His glorious impassible body is now inaccessible to grief and pain; but He still pursues His work of love and mercy amongst men.

The holy sacrifice of the mass is not merely the representation, it is also the continuation of the sacrifice of the cross. The Victim is offered unceasingly, to the glory of the most High God, and daily, upon every altar throughout the whole Catholic world does the adorable Heart of Jesus make intercession for sinners, and offer to the Father that sublime prayer which He first addressed to Him upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Alas, we are forced to confess, that Jesus has but a small number of faithful friends, even amongst the people whom He has so loved, and loaded with His favours. Not all the loving inventions of His most Sacred Heart, not all the immense prodigality of His love could win for Him the hearts of His ungrateful children, and the words of the beloved disciple are as true of us in

the present day, as they were of the generation of whom they were first uttered: "Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not." For does not Jesus still dwell amongst us in the most Holy Eucharist? does He not condescend to become our guest, our fellow-citizen, our friend? is not His abode close to our own, is not His house also ours? And is there one amongst us, whether rich or poor, who may not have free access to Him whenever he will? Is not Jesus always there to hear our prayers, to comfort us in sorrow, to strengthen us in weakness, to receive us whenever we seek His presence? nay, not content even with this, do we not behold Him traversing our very streets, in the hands of His faithful priests and servants, to visit those who cannot come to visit Him; to console the poor sufferer who lies on a bed of sickness, sighing for the beloved presence of his Lord; or to sanctify the last hours of the dying Christian? And yet, though He is so incomprehensibly kind, so infinitely sweet, yet Jesus is not loved, He is scarcely even known by the great body of professing Christians.

For even now, as in the day of His passion, our adorable Saviour has His enemies still. There are still many Pharisees in the world who persecute Him, hiding their vices, and the wickedness of their hearts, under the deceitful mask of hypocritical virtue. There are still sinners in the world, who crucify Jesus over again in their hearts by their violation of His most sacred laws, and put Him to an open shame in the souls of their brethren, by their bad example and dangerous advice. Alas! we find sinners everywhere. In

one place we see new Herods, who despise the meek and gentle Jesus, and make a mock of His mysterious doctrine, His humility and self-abasement. Here we meet proud unbelievers, ungodly men who refuse to submit their pride of reason to the word of eternal truth, who deny His real presence in the most Holy Eucharist. And imitating too faithfully, alas, the scribes and pharisees who insulted Him upon the cross, they cast defiance at Him at the very altar where He immolates Himself for them, saying in their hearts, "If Thou art here indeed, put off the veils which obscure Thee from our sight, show us Thy glory, and we will believe in Thee."

And yet all this ingratitude has never yet cooled the love of our adorable Jesus. As deep calleth unto deep, so does the depth of our malice call unto the depth of His love. Daily, and at every moment of each day, does the Lamb of God, whose blood taketh away the sins of the world, interpose Himself between His Father's justice and the sinners whom He has never once ceased to love; the voice of His blood joins with the voice of His Heart in imploring mercy for sinners. Jesus excuses them to God, as He excused His executioners: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Blinded by passion, surrounded by the seductions of the world, they comprehend not the evil of sin, nor do they contemplate its fearful punishment. They see not the greatness of the blessings they have despised, nor the depth of the abyss into which they have fallen. "Remember, O My Father, all that I have suffered for them, look upon the blood that I have

shed for their salvation, and which I offer to Thee again upon this altar." Such was the spirit of our Saviour's prayer, and doubt not that it touched His Father's Heart and disarmed His wrath; doubt not that when the angel of Divine Justice weighed the sins of mankind in his balance, the angel of mercy turned the scale in the favour of us poor sinners, by adding, on the other side, one drop of our Blessed Saviour's most Precious Blood.

#### IV.

The prayer which was offered upon the cross by Jesus, for His executioners, and which is still continued by Him upon the altar, is offered as much for us as for our brethren, whom perhaps we think to be more guilty, more in need of forgiveness than ourselves.

Doubtless we count it our pride and happiness to be numbered amongst the friends and disciples of our beloved Master, and our hearts answer for us, that we love Him and would not willingly grieve or displease Him. And yet is there one amongst us, who will venture to say that he is free from sin, or who would dare to look at the Cross and say that he had no participation in the sacrifice of that Most Holy Victim? Ah, we must each one of us repeat in the words of the Prophet King: "I have sinned," for we are all sinners, and the most innocent among us all, is but the one who is least guilty.

We are all the friends of Jesus now, but was there never a time when we were His enemies?

Have there not been hours, days, nay perhaps months and years in our lives, which greatly need forgiveness through His Blood ?

And even now, are we really His faithful friends, are we devoted to His service, ready to suffer all things for His sake, to sacrifice ourselves entirely to His glory ? No, we cannot venture to affirm this, our consciences reproach us with too many sins and negligences, too many faults which, though small in themselves, perhaps, are yet the more distressing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, because they are committed by those whom He calls His friends, by those on whom He counts as His faithful followers, and from whom He has a right to expect a greater share of love and gratitude.

We love Jesus, it is true, but our love to Him is weak, inconstant, self-interested. We love Him fervently so long as He consoles us, but we are lukewarm when He visits us with trials. We come gladly to sit down at His table, and enjoy the Sacred Feast of His Love, but we refuse to follow Him to Calvary, and drink of the Cup of His suffering and woe. We love Him, and yet turn away with horror from His poverty, suffering, and humiliation : our lives are full of sensuality, softness, luxury, self-seeking and self-pleasing, and we are for ever wanting in charity, meekness and gentleness. It is then as sinners that we come to kneel before Thine Altar of Sacrifice, it is as sinners that we claim our part in our Adorable Victim's prayers.

Let us then come to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, with humbled and contrite hearts, but also

with full confidence and love in our Most Blessed Lord, because it is for us that Jesus offers Himself, it is our cause He pleads, our faults which He is eager to excuse. Let us then unite in His cry for mercy, and that we may obtain it without fail, let us ourselves forgive from the very bottom of our hearts all those that have offended us. For how can we hope for pardon, if we refuse to forgive our brethren? And how can we dare to call ourselves the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, of the God of pardon and of love, if we preserve the very slightest shadow of resentment against any one who has offended us?

Ah, when we behold the Altar and the Cross, let us not content ourselves with forgiving our enemies, but let us pray for them, let us love them with the charity of Jesus Christ Himself; let us regard them as our brethren for whom He shed His Blood as He did for us, whom He loved as He loved us, and calls together with us to enter into the joys of our eternal home.

O Jesus, Lamb of God Who takest away the sins of the world, and Who wast offered for our salvation, adorable model of meekness and mercy, implore for me, implore for all poor sinners the same forgiveness which Thou didst implore from Thy Heavenly Father for those wretched men who had even then nailed Thee to the Cross. Grant to all of us, O my Jesus, the graces of a sincere repentance, and of unalterable confidence in Thy love and mercy, and suffer not, we pray Thee, O Lord, suffer not that any of those souls whom Thou hast loved and bought so dearly, should perish everlastingly. Amen.

## THE SECOND WORDS OF JESUS UPON THE CROSS.

"This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

## I.

The sacred mountain of Calvary is wrapped in thick darkness, and clouds envelope the altar of sacrifice and the sacred Victim as with a mourning robe; the enemies of our Blessed Lord are terrified at this marvel, their voices are hushed in sudden dread, and silence reigns around the cross. Jesus is still absorbed in sorrowful prayer. True high priest, and true victim upon the altar of the cross, He ceases not to offer His Blood and His Life for the salvation of the world.

The Immaculate Virgin still stands at the foot of the cross, her heart pierced with the sword of grief unspeakable; but she unites her prayer with the prayer of her Son; and their combined intercession rises like sweet incense to the throne of God. We cannot doubt that Mary also implored of God, the conversion of all those who had participated in the death of her Son; but may we not also suppose that her heart, full of love and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners, prayed more especially for the conversion of those two malefactors, who were crucified on either side of Jesus, and that she implored the salvation of those souls as a favour from God, in exchange for the life of her own most tenderly beloved Son, which was made a sacrifice for sinners on that day?

Yes, she prayed for those two souls who were

so soon to pass into eternity, and were suspended before her, as it were, between heaven and the yawning gulf of hell ; and as her prayer ascended to the throne of God, the precious Blood of our adorable Saviour flowed in streams from His open wounds, and a tide of redeeming grace poured simultaneously from His Heart burning with love to men, and fell like cooling refreshing dew upon the souls of His fellow-sufferers. But here was a fresh and intensely bitter grief to wring once more the loving Heart of Jesus, for one only of these souls was willing to give itself to Him, and to respond to the loving invitations of His mercy and His grace ; the soul of the impenitent thief, fiercely rejecting the proffered grace, rushed to meet eternal death at the side of Him who gave His life for his salvation, and the cross of love and mercy upon which the Saviour hung for sinners, became to that wretched man a tribunal of justice and condemnation.

Whilst this miserable being, who hung upon the left hand of Jesus, was thus hardening himself in evil and desperation, and sealing his own reprobation by blaspheming his Saviour and his God, the other, on the contrary, yielded up his whole soul to the sweet influences of grace, and surrendered himself completely to the inspirations of faith, repentance, gratitude, and love.

How powerful, how omnipotent, was this first grace, which issued from our Saviour's cross ! How complete and perfect was the faith which illuminated the soul of the penitent thief with its heavenly rays ! Even in the lives of the patriarchs and prophets, who were the glory of



Israel in former ages, I find no faith so wonderful, so incomparable as that which was displayed by this poor crucified thief. Abraham believed, but God spoke to him out of heaven; Moses believed, but the Most High called him from the midst of a burning bush, and displayed His power by wonders such as mortal man had never beheld; Isaias believed, but the Almighty God revealed Himself to him in the splendour of His majesty, sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and surrounded by a multitude of the heavenly host, who veiled their faces with their wings as they adored, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory. But the repentant thief believed in the divinity of Jesus in his heart, and made open confession of it with his mouth, at a time when he beheld Him not merely stripped of His divine power and glory, but sunk to the very lowest depths of abasement and humiliation, a very reproach of men, and despised of His chosen people, when He was poured out like water, and all His bones were out of joint, and He, the Lord of Life, was brought even into the dust of death.

This man, who was suffering the ignominious punishment commonly reserved for the vilest malefactors; the penitent thief acknowledged for his God and Lord; and he even nobly dared to proclaim the sanctity and innocence of His Life, when He was rejected and abhorred by the high priests and elders of His people. He proclaimed it when he reproved his companion whose voice joined with the Saviour's bitterest enemies, to blaspheme and revile His sacred name; he re-

proved him, and humbly implored mercy and forgiveness at the hands of his crucified Redeemer, although the angels, whose joyous songs had hailed the birth of the Infant of Bethlehem, did not visibly appear to weep over the cross, nor did the star which had conducted the magi to His cradle shed its bright rays over His dying head.

The faith of the penitent thief becomes more astonishing still when we consider that the faith even of apostles wavered in that awful hour. He confessed that the Man who hung agonizing by his side, dying of the same death which he, a convicted felon, was about to undergo, forsaken by His own disciples, reviled and derided by the high priests and elders and rulers of the people, he confessed Him to be the Lord and Author of Life, the Eternal King of Glory; he believed Him to be almighty whom he saw to be weak and exhausted with suffering and loss of blood, sinking in the last agony of death. On Calvary nought was visible but the cross, humiliation, and death; but faith beheld in Jesus the innocent victim paying the debt due by sinful man to the justice of God; it beheld in that meek, pale, suffering form covered with wounds and crowned with thorns; the glory and the joy of heaven, the Saviour and Messiah long promised and long expected by His people Israel, the Desire of all nations, the Son of David and the Son of God.

And the penitent thief was not contented with believing and confessing the Divinity of our Blessed Lord, he went further even than this: he placed his whole trust and confidence in His mercy, and with humble hope he said to Him,

“Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.” Ah! what a world of repentance, confidence, and love, is contained in this short prayer! The penitent thief had already confessed himself to be a sinner, he made a public acknowledgment of his offences when he said previously to his companion in wickedness, “For we indeed receive the just reward of our offences, but this just man hath done nothing amiss.”

And he now implores forgiveness, he entreats our Blessed Lord to pardon his offences, and in the short prayer he uttered, he seems to say, “O Thou who art suffering death for sinners, have pity upon the poor sinner who is suffering and dying at Thy side, save me from death everlasting, and remember me one day when Thou art in Thy kingdom, suffer me not to be separated from Thee eternally.”

Ah! it was pure love which inspired the dying thief to utter this memorable prayer. He knew not Jesus until the arrival of his last hour on earth, but he gave that last hour to Him so entirely, with such a wealth of faith and love, that it alone was worth a long life of ordinary devotion. He began to love Jesus in the moment when he was abandoned by all beside, when love seemed to be extinguished in the hearts of all His followers. He loved Him so ardently that he could not bear to be separated from Him, and yet he did not ask our Saviour to grant him a place in His kingdom. He asked but to be remembered when He should enter into it; he knew himself to be unworthy to follow Him there immediately, and even whilst

imploing His mercy, he submitted implicitly to His Justice.

## II.

The ear of Jesus was open to the prayer of that poor dying sinner, His Heart inclined mercifully to him, and with joy and love He received and gathered in that penitent soul, the first fruits of His redemption. The Cross, the instrument of His martyrdom, had now become His throne of mercy, and His tribunal from whence He performed the office of Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead: His dying eyes turned towards His humble suppliant with sweet compassion, as He gently pronounced these words of consolation, "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

How sweet, how pitiful, is the adorable Heart of our Jesus! How unequalled is His generosity! He is more willing to forgive than we are to receive His forgiveness. He grants always more than we dare to ask, and He is more eager to bestow His benefits upon us, than we are earnest in requesting them. The penitent thief asked Him only to *remember* him when He should come into His kingdom, and in return, Jesus promised him the immediate possession of eternal happiness. He did not promise him forgiveness at some future time, He granted him immediate, full, free, and instantaneous forgiveness: He not only forgave him all his sins, but He also accorded him a full remission of all the punishment which they so justly merited.

He promised to take him to Paradise that very day, so that he should pass instantaneously from the agony of crucifixion to the infinite and eternal joys of our heavenly home.

Who but a God could have made such a promise as this? Who but the Lord of heaven and earth could have rewarded the faith of this poor sufferer with so magnificent a recompense? Why then do not all the enemies of our Blessed Saviour cast themselves at the foot of that Cross, to which their grievous sins have nailed Him, and with the penitent thief implore His mercy and forgiveness? Does He not give full proof of His Godhead by this exercise of His sovereign power in the very arms of death, by thus opening the gates of heaven at His will, and disposing of it as of a heritage which of right belongs to Him, and which He is eager to share with all those who shall believe and hope in Him? And does He not also show them that He is their Saviour, and that by His Death He obtains for them eternal life? Yes, doubtless He gives full proof of this when He converts a sinner into a confessor and a saint; He reveals the riches of mercy and loving kindness which His adorable Heart contains, when He raises up this degraded, miserable man from the very depths of wretchedness and crime, and washes his polluted soul, and cleanses it from every stain in His own most precious Blood. But, alas, His mercy moves them not; their hearts, harder than the nether millstone, reject all the loving advances of our Blessed Lord, and resist the pressing solicitations of His grace; and His Blood, shed *by* them, but ah, shed *for* them also, will be shed in vain for

the greater number of those who are gathered round His Cross.

Sister Catherine Emmerich, in her revelations, tells us, that the holy family, during their flight into Egypt, were detained in the desert by a party of robbers, who were so touched with their meek and saintly appearance, so unspeakably affected by the sight of the Divine Child, that they treated them with the greatest respect and reverence, led them to the grotto in which they had taken up their own abode, and offered them every attention and kindness which it was in their power to bestow. The wife of one of these robbers had a child that was afflicted with leprosy. Mary was touched at the sight of his sufferings, and at the poor mother's grief, and when she had bathed her Infant Jesus, she desired the poor woman to wash the little leper in the water she had used for Him. She willingly obeyed, and her child was instantly restored to perfect health. This little one, who was thus healed by Jesus at the very commencement of his life, was to meet Him yet once more at his dying hour, and the sudden purification which his cleansed and leprous body had undergone in his infancy was but the figure of the purification of his sinful soul, which Jesus cleansed and sanctified by washing it in His own Blood. There is something very touching in this little story; it is sweet to observe how the mercy of our Blessed Lord pursued the soul of this poor sinner from the cradle to the grave: it is sweet to hear Him promise an everlasting home in His own kingdom to the poor outcast whose parent had pitied Him in His own weakness and distress, and had showed

kindness to His Blessed Mother and to His adopted father in His childhood's days.

And to how many tempted souls has the Cross proved to be the gate of heaven, as it was to the penitent thief : how many, after long storms, tempest-tossed and weary, have found the Cross to be the port and refuge of their souls, where meeting Jesus they have held Him fast, and never let Him go ? How often do our souls wander from God in times of happiness and prosperity, forgetting our Creator and Saviour when all around us is bright and fair, and sorrow has never yet touched our hearts ? But when God visits us with His chastising Hand, when in His wisdom and mercy He stretches forth His Hand and strikes us in the tenderest part, then we groan and sigh in anguish and tears, but most frequently we turn to Him who has afflicted us, our own sufferings recall to our minds the Saviour's bitter woes : we call upon Him in the day of affliction, and fixing our eyes and hearts upon the Cross of Jesus, we find salvation and eternal life, as earthly joys and hopes decay.

Suffering is one of the most precious graces which can be granted to the soul, but we must never forget that, like all other graces, it is liable to be abused. The impenitent thief lost his soul, he lost all his hopes of eternal happiness upon the cross, he was ruined for ever, at the side of Jesus, suffering and dying for him ! Let us not, like him, change the remedy which God mercifully bestows upon us for our salvation and healing into a deadly poison, as we shall do if we suffer with impatience and murmuring against His heavenly

will ; for suffering is meritorious only when we accept it with resignation, and endure it patiently in union with those far more bitter sufferings which Jesus endured so meekly for our sakes.

### III.

Our adorable Saviour commenced upon the Altar of the Cross, that same mission of love and mercy which He now continues in the Sacrament of His Love ; in which He is truly the comforter of the sick and of the dying. For Jesus is more especially the help and food and hope of the sick in His Most Holy Eucharist, and He is not their hope alone, He is also their friend, their strength, their resignation, their joy, the Viaticum of those who are about to depart out of this world into eternity, the guide to lead them safely into the promised land on high : the eternal life of those who are about to die.

How good is Jesus in His holy Eucharist, when He comes to visit the poor sufferer in his humble dwelling, who can no longer go to visit Him in His temple ! How good is Jesus, when He condescends to visit him, not only in his house, but in his heart, coming to comfort his sorrows, to heal his afflictions, to calm his fears, and bid his terrors cease : to be his support, his peace, and his happiness in the midst of sufferings the most bitter and agonizing that our poor human nature can undergo !

None can comfort us like Jesus, none can love like Him, and none can know the full tenderness



of His love, the holy industry with which He seeks to console and strengthen the sick and suffering ones whom He comes to visit in His Sacrament of love; until they have themselves received that heavenly visit, until they have experienced the sweetness of those Divine consolations, until they have felt the hand of Jesus wiping away the tears which pain and sorrow had wrung from their eyes. The tenderest mother on earth is less loving to her darling child, than Jesus is to the suffering soul. How much are they to be pitied, who in their sickness and sorrow are afraid of God, who dread the visits of His ministers, and refuse the sweetest of all consolations, even the visit of the Great Physician of our souls, the most sweet God of the Holy Eucharist!

But how happy is the sick and afflicted one, who on his bed of suffering remembers Jesus, calls upon Jesus, and repeats from his inmost heart the words of the sisters of Lazarus: "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." How happy are those souls that sigh ardently for the visit of their Lord, that aspire after Him with fervent desires, and look to Him as the only comfort and alleviation in all their grief. For, in fact, to the soul that loves Jesus, to the soul that lives by the most Holy Eucharist, and finds its only joys at the foot of the altar; there is no sorrow so great as that of being deprived of Him, and the burning wasting fever, the sharpest attacks of pain, the most wearing hours of sickness, are as nothing in comparison to the deprivation of His most sacred presence.

But our heavenly Friend does not delay His

coming, He longs to comfort, to support, to strengthen our weary souls ; and the cry of our hearts to Him is answered by His tender voice, softly saying, "I will come and heal Thee." And soon does He issue from His prison of love ; soon does He come with eager tenderness to the heart that longs for Him. O what joy, what happiness does the sick man feel, when he sees his humble dwelling honoured by the presence of his Saviour and His God ! Does not his heart throb fast with joy when he beholds the ciborium which contains the sacred Host ? do not all the powers of his soul thrill with eager joy and gratitude, and fly, as it were, to meet the heavenly visitant ? He may be weak, languishing, exhausted with pain and suffering ; he may be unable to leave his couch, and bend his knee before his God ; but his soul falls prostrate in humblest adoration, his whole being adores his Lord and his God, his heart finds strength to love his Jesus, to love Him more ardently than even before, and his tears express his gratitude and love.

But Jesus comes, not only to visit the sick, but to give Himself to him, to unite His adorable flesh to his weak diseased body, now tortured with pain and fast sinking to decay. The priest draws near, he places upon the sick man's lips the Bread of Life, the pledge of immortality, and then silently withdraws. Ah ! that is indeed the hour, blessed above all others to the poor sufferer. Now he no longer suffers alone, for Jesus is with him. He no longer suffers, for the adored Presence of the Beloved of his soul lays all his pain to sleep, or if indeed he suffers still, yet are all his sufferings

turned to joy and happiness. For how sweet are the words of comfort which Jesus whispers to his soul! How sweet are those tears of gratitude which flow down his cheeks in reply to His Redeemer's gracious words! But let us not venture to describe the sweet intercourse which now takes place between the suffering soul and the heavenly Physician, who has bestowed Himself upon him. These are secrets, experience of which alone can declare the sweetness and the joy. We can but say that it supports the soul under all the weakness and fear which nature feels at the near approach of death and judgment, and enables it to estimate aright the value of suffering in the sight of Jesus, and the magnificent recompense which, if we endure it patiently, we shall hereafter receive at His Hands.

#### IV.

But it is not only in life and suffering that we need the God of the most holy Eucharist, we need Him more especially in the hour of death. In that awful hour our eternal destiny will be decided, and its approach, even to the just man, must needs be terrible. Though our lives may have been pure, though our confidence in God be firm and steadfast, yet nature shrinks to meet the judgment of God, it trembles at the thought of standing in the presence of that infinitely holy One, in whose sight even the angels are not perfect, and who discovers defects where we can see nought but virtue and perfection. And in that

dread hour nature reasserts her rights over the tried and wearied soul, which cannot see unmoved the approach of the last dread hour, when she must leave for ever all that she loved below, when she must bid an eternal adieu to earth, and separate herself from the body which has so long been her inseparable companion, bound to her by links too strong to be severed without suffering and tears.

Ah, it is above all at this decisive awful moment that we need to be fortified with the Bread of the Strong, it is at the hour of death that we most imperatively require the Bread of Life and Immortality. It is at this solemn moment that we need a faithful friend, a strong arm to lean upon in the last strife with the enemy. And the love of Jesus never fails the faithful soul, He comes, He hastens to support her, to give Himself to her once again in time as a pledge of His presence with her throughout eternity. He lays the poor soul to rest upon His bosom, when all earthly support fails her, and consoles her with these sweet words, "Fear not, for I am with thee, I am thy Saviour as well as thy Judge; all earthly comforts fail thee, but I will never leave thee, and thy eternal happiness shall now begin."

Thus united to her Beloved, the soul is filled with heavenly peace and consolation, a foretaste of that eternal peace to which she is fast hastening. The remembrance of her past offences troubles her not; she detests her sins, but, filled with hope and confidence in the infinite mercy of God, she looks for full forgiveness through the Blood of Jesus, who is with her, and has cleansed and

purified her soul once again in that life-giving stream; and sweetly as an infant sinks to sleep in its mother's arms, does this ransomed soul repose on her Saviour's bosom, and trust implicitly in Him. She casts back a glance at her past life, and as she remembers all the dangers which she has escaped, the trials which she has been enabled to endure, she blesses the kind hand which has led her on through all the storms of time, and supported her in peril and in danger, and with loving joyful gratitude she says with Jesus in His dying hour: "It is consummated:" tears, sufferings, sacrifices, all are over for ever: all these things are passed away never to return.

But the God of the most holy Eucharist, when He pays His last visit to the faithful soul, does not only preserve her from excessive fear, at the near approach of the judgment, He also calms her natural apprehension at the sight of death. He revives her faith by showing her the first bright glimmer of eternal day, and when all around speaks to her only of death and destruction, Jesus reminds her of life and immortality. He reminds her that He has conquered death, and that the just has no longer anything to fear from the king of terrors, that the grave which seems so fearful is but the place of repose where her body shall await in peace the resurrection morn, and He shews her that her body cannot perish everlastingly, since it has been united so frequently to His own adorable body, which has deposited in her frail form a germ of life and immortality; and that the day will come when it shall arise impassible and glorious from that dark

tomb into which it is now cast lifeless and decaying.

And the merciful kindness of the good God of the most holy Eucharist is not confined to the dying saint who receives Him in his last hour. Even for the dying sinner Jesus has rich graces and mercies in store, and when the penitent offender has confessed his sins, and implored the forgiveness of the God whom he has perhaps for long years forgotten or despised, He comes with speed, full of mercy and compassion, eager and delighted to save this soul, so nearly lost, from the grasp of the evil one, to gain back the wandering sheep for which He had sought during so many long years, mourning over its ingratitude and delay.

How frequently has the miracle of grace effected by Jesus from the cross in the heart of the penitent thief been renewed at the death-bed of a poor sinner! How many poor souls, who have met Jesus in the opening of their lives, on the happy day of their first communion, who have been cleansed from the leprosy of sin in His Blood, fed and nourished by His own substance, yet have then wandered from the fold, and lost sight of the Good Shepherd, being enticed away by the delusive pleasures of the world, and held fast amongst the thorns and briars of sin, so that they never find Him more until their last hour arrives, and they are stretched upon the cross of their bed of death. But when they reach that last stage on life's weary pilgrimage, how often do these poor souls turn a hopeful eye towards their Saviour's cross, exclaiming from the depths of a broken and contrite heart, "Lord, remember me

now that Thou art in Thy kingdom. O Jesus, God of my youth, most sweet God of my first communion, have pity upon me, and save me, save my soul, which Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious Blood, forgive me all my sins, and be Thou my God throughout all eternity." Ah, never did Jesus turn a deaf ear to such a prayer as this, never did He turn away from the poor sinner who called upon Him, however late may be that return, even if it be at the last hour, the last moment of his life; so long as death has not yet sealed his reprobation, Jesus is ever ready to forgive; it is never too late to seek Him, and many many times has He replied from His throne of glory in heaven to the humble repentant cry of the dying sinner, in the same consoling words as those which He addressed from His cross of pain to the penitent thief who was dying by His side: "Amen, I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."

It even seems that love for sinners is the prevailing passion in the Heart of our Blessed Lord: He thirsts to save their souls, He never forsakes them until not the slightest hope remains of delivering them from that fearful gulf into which they have cast themselves by their sins; and as long as but a breath of life remains the Good Shepherd follows them, His grace entreats them, earnestly solicits them, and doubtless at the very moment of death mysteries of grace and mercy may be revealed to the passing soul which the last day alone will unfold in all their beauty and fulness.

Let us then strive to feel as Jesus feels, to

love sinners as our dear Master loves them, and at least let us never suffer one day to pass without offering fervent prayer to Him for those multitudes who will never see the light of another day; let us pray more particularly for the myriads of sinners who must soon appear before the awful tribunal of justice; let us implore Him, by His agony, by His Blood-shedding, by His cross, and by His last sigh, to cast upon those poor souls a glance of compassion and mercy, and to grant them one of those powerful inspirations of grace which enlighten, soften, and purify the hearts of sinners.

And let us also intreat His mercy for the hour of our own death, saying frequently, O Jesus, God of the Cross, most sweet God of the Holy Eucharist, Heavenly Friend, whose adored Presence has brightened the days of my exile upon earth, Divine Guide, who dost direct my steps in the desert of life, Bread of Life, who dost give me strength in trial, be Thou my Viaticum in the hour of death. Come then, O my Jesus, come to support my last earthly steps, wipe away my last tears, receive my latest sigh, and in union with Thee, may my soul quit this world to be united to Thee in heaven eternally. Amen.



## THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

*Third Sentence.*

“Woman, behold thy Son.”

God, in raising Mary to the august dignity of Mother of His only Son, did not only destine her to enjoy the unspeakable pleasures of Divine Maternity, but He also decreed that she should experience the most agonizing grief that a mother's heart could know. The Blessed Virgin, being privileged above all other creatures, blessed amongst women, was also destined to share more largely than any other daughter of Eve, in that most precious of all the blessings God can bestow, namely, the blessing of *suffering*. As Mother of the Redeemer of the human race, she was destined to follow Him in the Way of Sorrow, and to co-operate with Him in the work of our salvation: she was to accompany the sacred Victim of the sins of men, leading Him, so to speak, to the altar, and crowning Him with her double love of Mother and Saint, as with a sacrificial wreath.

From all eternity, the place of Mary at the foot of the Cross of Jesus, had been marked out by God, as her station by His cradle had been decreed also; it was His will and pleasure that the mother's tears should mingle with the Blood of her beloved Son: that she should endure those sufferings in her heart which He underwent in His Body: it was His will that she should immolate herself

upon the Altar of the Cross by consenting to His immolation, by consenting to the death of the sole object of her love. And not only was it the Will of God that this should be, but it seems to us that if Mary had not been present during the sacrifice of her Son, if she had not been close to Him, standing at the foot of His Cross, it seems as if the bitterest of all the drops of gall which mingled in His cup of woe, would have been absent; that the most cruel of all those thorns which pierced His loving Heart would have been spared to the King of martyrs; for if Mary loved her Son more tenderly than ever son was loved before, Jesus too loved Mary more than ever mother was beloved; and therefore her presence at the foot of the Cross was not so much a consolation to His loving Heart as a fresh torture added to the tortures which already well-nigh overwhelmed Him.

We may perhaps be able to form some idea of the sorrows and agonies of woe that a mother must feel when she beholds the death of her only and tenderly beloved son: this grief, great as it is, is capable of description, because it is experienced daily by some sad mother in our world of woe, and all mothers' hearts are formed alike to love and suffering. But if we would comprehend the sorrows of Mary at the foot of the Cross, upon which her Son hung in His last agony, we must also be able to comprehend the love of that mother for her Son, a love which surpassed that felt by all other mothers for their children, for in Mary's Son, she saw and loved her *God*. She loved Him with all the tenderness and strong devoted attachment which the best of earthly mothers feels, but

she loved Him also with all the purity of love, the burning transports and holy ecstasies which the purest, the most perfect of creatures alone can feel. And even the heavenly intelligences who burn in the Presence of God with all the fervent ardours of immortal love, would be powerless as ourselves to depict or comprehend the love which Mary felt for Jesus and the martyrdom of suffering which she underwent at the foot of the Cross.

Jesus alone could comprehend His Mother's Heart, He alone could measure the depth and the height of her love, He alone knew the treasures of tenderness, devotedness and compassion that her heart contained, and at the same time the depth of bitter anguish and unspeakable grief which was produced in that tender heart by her ineffable love. That immaculate, maternal heart was open as a book to the searching eye of the Redeemer of mankind. He beheld each one of His own sufferings reproduced in that loving heart with distressing truth and reality, and each throb of pain which proceeded from His own agonized bosom repeated with equal force in hers. He saw her love increase, and grow stronger every instant; it increased and kept pace with the increasing tortures which He endured, until her heart was overwhelmed with a torrent of love and agony, like a river swelled with continual floods, rushing to its goal in the deep ocean.

For the sufferings of the being we most fondly cherish, serve but to augment our love, and as we watch by the sick bed of our loved ones, each pang which they endure seems to awaken a new chord of tender sympathy in our souls, and to call

forth fresh proofs of devotedness and love: we redouble our attentions, our tender cares, and if it were possible we would gladly take all the weight of their sufferings upon ourselves, and would willingly redeem their lives by the sacrifice of our own. And Mary, whose heart was more tender, loving and compassionate than that of any living being, felt all this and far more, and that with a lively intensity of grief such as we are not even able to imagine with our limited capacities. Nor did Mary stand by the Cross to assist her beloved Son, or to relieve His sufferings, as we stand by the bed-side of our loved ones. No, she was there only to suffer, to suffer by Him, with Him, and for Him.

O what agony to a mother's heart! to behold her Son enduring agonizing grief and pain, to see Him covered with wounds, devoured by thirst, to stand close to Him, and yet to be unable to wipe away the blood which streamed from His wounds, to hold a refreshing drink to His parched and burning lips, or to lay to rest on her bosom that suffering head bowed down with the weight of sorrow and pain. Ah, Mother, thine affection far surpasses aught that our hard hearts can feel; justly does the Church hail thee Queen of martyrs; and when I behold thee standing thus at the foot of the cross, where hangs thy beloved Son, my soul is lost in mingled admiration of thy wondrous heroism and compassion for thine unimaginable woes; thy heroic patience, thy saintly resignation display thy divine maternity in radiant colours; for none but the Mother of God could have acted

with such sublime courage and devoted love, as thou didst display on Calvary.

## II.

As we before observed, the presence of Mary upon Calvary was an additional cause of suffering to the loving Heart of Jesus; and we cannot doubt that one of the most bitter agonies of all His bitter passion, was caused Him by the sight of His Mother's grief. Not that Jesus did not fully appreciate the devoted love which led her to follow Him to the last, and which now seemed to nail her, as it were, to the foot of His cross of pain; but His own tender love to His Mother caused Him to desire her absence, and He would, in a manner, have suffered less if He could have spared her the agonizing spectacle of His sufferings and death.

In order to comprehend more fully the agony which was caused to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by the presence of Mary at the foot of the cross, let us remember what we may have felt ourselves when we have been attacked by some dangerous illness, and have beheld our own mother standing beside our bed of suffering. In vain did she endeavour to hide from us her sorrow and uneasiness, we could see her fears plainly depicted in the anxious looks which she fixed upon us, we could feel them in the tender speeches she addressed to us so continually, in the tears which she in vain strove to restrain, which fell upon our foreheads with her loving kiss.

Then, O then, we could almost have wished that our mother had loved us less tenderly; we appreciated fully her love, her devoted care, we felt that no other created being could ever fill her place, or love us as she had done; but because we too loved her tenderly, we suffered deeply in her grief, and, to spare her further suffering, we suppressed our complaints and tears, and we strove to conceal from her the sufferings which her maternal heart too plainly divined. And if, in later years, the treasure which God had bestowed upon us for a time, was taken from us by His almighty hand—if the angel of love who had always been the most lively image of His love and mercy, was recalled by Him to her eternal home; if then we were again visited by sickness, did not our hearts, in recalling the memory of days gone by, find comfort in remembering how much sorrow had been spared to our beloved mother, and even at the moment when we most deeply felt the absence of her loving tender care, when we seemed to have lost all in losing her, even then we were consoled by saying in our hearts, “I am suffering without her, but at least she is not suffering through me.”

If our hearts are not already so filled with egotism and self-love as to be incapable of entertaining a disinterested affection and forgetting themselves in the sorrows of those they love, let us endeavour to realize the suffering which Jesus must have endured from the presence of His beloved Mother at the foot of the Cross. Jesus loved His Mother infinitely more than she could love Him, for His Heart was more loving, more

compassionate than any human heart that ever beat. Her anguish was all unveiled beneath His clear seeing eye, not a torment endured by her could be unknown to Him, or fail to be reflected in His loving soul, which was filled with agony unspeakable. Jesus knew that every drop of that Most Precious Blood which He poured out so freely for our sakes, fell upon His Mother's soul like drops of liquid flame, and left an ineffaceable wound. He knew all that she would have done for Him, and her inability to aid Him afflicted Him most deeply for her sake. In her mournful eyes so sadly fixed upon Him, He read the ardent love and agonizing grief that filled her soul, as she heard the blasphemies of His enemies, and beheld Him deserted by all His friends, and suffering cruel tortures, to which her sufferings, the sufferings of the most loving, as well as the most beloved of mothers, added a sharper sting.

It is therefore true, that if the compassion of Mary for the sufferings of her Divine Son was inexpressibly great, the compassion felt by Jesus for the sufferings of His holy Mother was still greater, and yet He did nothing to alleviate her pain, He did not utter one word of sympathy or compassion, and did not even seem to perceive that she was standing at the foot of His Cross. He knew that Mary was accustomed to read His Heart, and that she needed no words of His to express His feelings of love to her. And also, because Mary was the most perfect of all creatures, the dearest object of His affections, He chose her to participate most fully in His cup of suffering, and even to drain it with Him to the very dregs. He also designed to

show us by her example how best to immolate all our natural feelings to God, and how to raise ourselves most fully above all the weaknesses of flesh and blood when we are called upon to suffer for the glory of our Sovereign Lord and Master, and to perform His will in silent resignation.

Our Blessed Lord had already spoken twice, since He had been nailed to the Cross: His first words were addressed to His heavenly Father, to implore forgiveness for His persecutors; on the second occasion, He opened His adorable lips to promise a place at His side in Paradise to the penitent thief: but He seemed to have forgotten His Mother, His first words were not addressed to her whose love had surrounded Him so closely and watchfully during His whole earthly life, and though the Saviour's Heart was ready to console the miserable robber who hung by His side, His filial Heart seemed to have no word of love to bestow upon His Mother. Ah! a profound mystery is hidden here! Jesus was associating His Mother with all the torments He endured in His Passion, and as He was sinking to the very lowest depths of grief, and saw Himself abandoned by all His creatures, forsaken apparently even by His Father in heaven, so was Mary, to all appearance, forsaken also by her Son.

But Jesus seems at length suddenly to call His Mother to remembrance. His dying eyes are seeking her at the foot of the Cross, and pointing out to her with an expressive glance the Beloved Disciple who was standing with her beneath His Cross, He said to her, "Woman, behold thy Son," and to the Disciple, "Behold thy mother." Alas,



these words brought little consolation to the Queen of martyrs, rather did they redouble her griefs. Her Son is dying : in losing Him she loses her all, and it seems as if He were driving with His own Hand the sword of woe yet deeper into her heart. What then, O my Jesus, is it at the very moment when Mary loses you that you offer her another Son ? And who then can fill your place ? Who can be *Yourselves* to her ? And why is the name of "Woman" substituted for that sweet name of *Mother* which charmed her ears so sweetly when it was first pronounced by the Infant Jesus : or is that glorious title now denied her, which was at once the source of her chief joys and bitterest grief ? No, Jesus does not refuse to Mary her sweet name of *Mother*, but here again does a deep mystery lie concealed which the Virgin Mother's heart well divined, and which must also be understood by ours.

Jesus never refused the sweet name of mother to Mary, on the contrary, when He called her Woman, He proclaimed in the plainest terms her Divine Maternity.

In that solemn moment, the Virgin who is blessed above all virgins, received the honours of a new Annunciation. It was as Mother of the Redeemer of men that Jesus hailed her from His Cross. In her He saluted that mysterious Woman promised by God to our first parents in the very moment of their banishment from the lovely shades of Eden : the Woman so often foreseen and announced by the prophets throughout the succeeding ages of the world. He saluted her as the Second Eve, who should repair all the evils and

miseries which the first Eve had brought into the world, and should crush the head of the old serpent, even the devil. And by this noble title He saluted her, as He announced to her the dignities of her new maternity, in virtue of which she became the mother, not of the Beloved Disciple only, but also of the whole human race.

Mary comprehended the meaning of her Son, she felt that He was disposing of her as He had a right to do, for was she not His own, His possession, and His treasure? She knew that having given Himself to man, He was now bestowing upon us His dearest earthly treasure, and that by this dying legacy He meant to say to her, "I desire that they should be my brethren indeed, be thou their mother, love them as thou hast loved Me, do for them as you would have done for Me." And she submissively bowed her head and heart to the behest of her First-born, she obeyed the command of that beloved Son whom she had brought forth with ecstatic joy and happiness, and as she had said in the day of her first Annunciation, so did she now repeat in her heart: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." Then opening her immaculate heart to receive all the redeemed of Calvary, she vowed to love us as a mother, she adopted us all as her children, and brought us forth spiritually in that ecstasy of sorrow, at the foot of that very Cross where the true Fruit of her most chaste womb was then expiring in agony to give us life by His Death.

## III.

Yes, we are most truly brethren of Jesus and children of Mary, for our most loving Saviour is not content with suffering us to call His Father our Father, not content even with giving us His beloved Mother to be our Mother, as a last pledge and token of His immense and inexhaustible love; He goes further even than this, and contracts a species of consanguinity with us all by causing His own Blood to flow in our veins through the medium of the most holy Eucharist. In holy Communion Jesus unites Himself with us, He identifies us with Himself, and as it were reduplicates Himself in us. He dwells in us, He engraves His image on our souls, He inoculates us with His own tastes, feelings, and spirit, He covers us with His merits, washes us in His adorable Blood, and inebriates us with the same most precious Blood which He first drew from Mary's veins.

When the most Blessed Virgin looks down from her throne in heaven, upon one who has just united himself to her beloved Son by a good and fervent communion, her maternal heart is moved and thrilled with love, for she recognizes Jesus in that fervent communicant, she points him out to the angels, saying to them, "This is also my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. Watch over him, protect him well." And how tenderly does the Mother of Mercy regard that soul, so poor in itself, but now made so bright in the blood of our redemption, so richly clad in that magnificent robe of our Saviour's merits, which he has

now made his own ! And when that happy soul directs its humble prayer to the throne of glory, where She sits in heaven who is the mother of the poor exiled children of earth, when it implores her protection and benediction, then Mary listens with well-pleased attention. And as Isaac said in former times, so does she now say : " The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau ; these vestments belong to my first-born son, and are perfumed with that incense which God hath blessed." Or, in less figurative terms, the voice that I hear is the voice of a sinner, but it strikes sweetly on mine ears, for it is united with another voice which is always powerful to move and bend my heart. Nor is this all, for Jesus, my only beloved, has not only clothed this poor sinner in His own garments, but He has incorporated him with Himself, so that he lives, he thinks, he loves, he suffers, and he acts in Him, and that sweet odour of innocence, purity, sweetness, and charity, which exhales from that soul, is truly the perfume which proceeds from the adorable Heart of my sweet Jesus.

And Mary extends her hands, from which all graces and blessings flow in fertilizing streams ; she spreads them in benediction over that soul, she opens her maternal heart to receive and welcome the friend, the brother of Jesus.

Mary's heart rejoices in all the homage that her Blessed Son receives in the most Holy Eucharist. She is most especially the Mother of all the souls that live by Him, and that love Him most tenderly in the sacrament of His love. Their devotion to the hidden God, to the most sweet God of the

Holy Eucharist, their unceasing adoration, their praise and thanksgiving, all rejoice the heart of Mary, and make some recompense to her for the sorrows which she endured at the foot of the cross. To see Jesus loved and glorified, to see His reign established in the hearts of men, is Mary's only desire; therefore, all those who labour to promote His glory, and spread His kingdom upon earth, may be assured of her favour and protection.

But if Mary has a love of predilection for those souls that are truly devoted and faithful to her beloved Son, if she is in a peculiar manner their protectress and friend, she does not forget that she has other children who are equally the children of her sorrow. Alas! she knows too well that the world is full of sinners, who perpetually renew the death and passion of our Blessed Lord, and inflict fresh wounds upon her loving heart; she knows it well, but she feels no anger towards them, rather, like a Mother who beholds her darling child on the brink of some fearful precipice, she stretches out her arms with eager desire to save them; for the voice of Jesus calls to her from His altar throne, from His hiding-place in the tabernacle; He calls her, saying, "I thirst, I thirst for the souls whom I have entrusted to your maternal care. I have given them to you, they are your own. Quench this burning thirst, which I felt in my crucifixion hour; move My Father's pity for the multitudes of sinners who are still hastening to the pit of destruction. They are My brethren, they are also your children; they are doubly sealed to Me by baptism and by My precious blood. Daily do I renew for them

upon the altar, that sacrifice which was consummated upon Mount Calvary, piercing your Son's Heart, O My Mother, with a sword of bitter grief; save them, for they are the purchase of My Blood and of your sorrow and tears."

Mary hears the compassionate voice of her beloved Son, and, forgetting the joys of her glorious immortality, she remembers only the children of her grief; it seems to her that she is in heaven only that she may employ her whole powers of entreaty and supplication in their favour, and, prostrating herself before the throne of the Thrice Holy God, she uses her powerful intercession with Him, she pleads with her whole heart the cause of the poor sinners whose advocate she has now become. And can she fail to gain the cause for which she pleads so earnestly, can a Mother cease her intercession until she obtains for her children the boon so fervently implored?

Mary does not only plead the cause of sinners, she defends them also, against the just anger of Almighty God. How often does she interpose between the sinner and the chastisement due to his sins! how often does she plead with her Son, saying, "Pity, and forgive this soul, my Son, for it is mine; spare it, I beseech Thee, for Thou hast given it to me. Upon the cross Thou didst confide it to my love, and now I claim it for mine own; I implore Thee, in the name of the blood which Thou didst shed for it, in the name of the sorrows of my maternal heart." And the wrath of Jesus is appeased by the sweet accents of His Mother's voice, the bolt of vengeance is withdrawn, and He looks compassionately at the sinner, whom

He now beholds through the medium of His own Blood and His Mother's tears. Ah, how many sinners owe their salvation to Mary, and will bless her for ever in transports of gratitude and joy !

Let us also strive to enter into the feelings of love and compassion for poor sinners, with which the hearts of Jesus and Mary are filled to overflowing. Let us love them as brethren, let us also become their mediators, and pray for them without ceasing. Alas ! many of them may be very dear to us ; if it indeed be so, let us pray, let us weep for them continually before the tabernacle ; Jesus will hear our prayers ere long, and will say to us, " Weep no more." He will raise up these souls which have so long been dead in sin ; He will restore the father, brother, husband, for whom we have prayed and wept so many, many years, and will cause them to bring forth the fruits of justice to the praise and glory of His name.

Let us never forget that Mary is our Mother, the refuge of all poor sinners ; let us confide all our fears and sorrows to her, let us implore her love and mercy for those who are so dear to us, and to touch her heart more surely, let us do this at the moment when Jesus is with us, when we are united to Him by holy Communion, for then will our power be unbounded over her loving Mother's heart. How can she refuse us anything when Jesus implores her in us and with us ? She cannot turn a deaf ear to our humble supplications, when we implore her to have pity upon our wandering brethren, to bring back the scattered sheep, in the name of that sacred Body of our adorable Saviour which was formed in her virginal

womb, and which is now united so closely to ours; in the name of that blood which had its source in her pure veins; in the name of that Sacred Heart which once throbbed beside her own, and which now beats near ours. Mary, we know, will be touched by our confidence in her, her maternal hand will be outstretched to bless us, and to bless all those whom we place under her protection, and by means of her powerful intercession we shall obtain from the goodness of the Lord, not only all that we have asked, but more even than we could either ask or think.

#### IV.

Mary is our Mother in heaven, Mother of Mercy, Mother of compassion, full of tenderness and love to her poor children upon earth, and to this tender Mother are justly due our confidence, our gratitude, our love. But, besides the Mother who is our mediator in heaven, the channel through which all graces flow to us from her beloved Son, who loves to bestow His favours through her, our Blessed Lord has given us a mother also upon earth, whose duty it is to feed our souls with the pure milk of the word and doctrine of Christ, to administer His sacraments, and to guide us safely to Him through all the dangers of the world, by the sacred light of faith which is entrusted to her alone, and will be maintained by her for evermore.

We know this mother well, it is the Church, the immaculate spouse of our beloved Saviour,



who was conceived and borne in His adorable Heart during the thirty-three years of His life on earth, and brought forth upon Calvary in the midst of bitter suffering and tears, when the lance of the Roman soldier pierced the side of the Second Adam, who was then sleeping His death sleep upon the cross. And to her, our mother on earth, we also owe a debt of gratitude, submission, reverence and love.

The Church, in whose bosom, by the special favour of Almighty God we first awoke to life, received us in her arms in our earliest infancy, and we became her children when we became also, by the grace of holy baptism, children of God, and brethren and co-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. In that most blessed day, we were cleansed from the stains of original sin, and set free from the power of the devil; we received the glorious title of children of God, in the first place, and children of the Church, in the second; and when the angels inscribed our names in the registers of eternal life, Jesus presented us to His Church, and said, "Behold your child," and to us, "Behold your mother."

Henceforth we were made partakers in all the blessings bestowed upon the Church by her Heavenly Spouse, her rich treasury of graces and merits was freely opened to us, and we became forever the children of her love. She watched over our infancy with maternal tenderness; with the first light of dawning reason she impressed upon our infant minds the great mysteries of the faith, and when, in our early youth, we fell into sin, she cleansed our souls in the sacred laver of penance,

led us with joyous hearts to the heavenly table of our Saviour's love, presented us to her Divine Spouse in the radiant robes of innocence, and rejoiced over us as a mother rejoices in the happiness of her child. Then, trembling for our weakness, she called down upon us the Spirit of light and strength, and armed us with the weapons of faith, to fight the battles of the Lord of Hosts. It would be too long to enumerate one half of the benefits which our mother has bestowed upon us, it is enough to say that her love follows us without intermission from the cradle to the grave. Nay, more, it follows us beyond the tomb, for when she has led us to the bounds of this mortal life, when she has surrounded our dying bed with her sweet consolations and heavenly hopes, she blesses the earth in which our mortal remains are laid to rest ; and then she remembers us still, even when we are forgotten by all who once loved us upon earth ; and, in her eager solicitude, she still pleads for us with the just Judge of the whole earth, she implores Him, night and day, to shorten our sufferings, and to speed the time in which our eternal happiness shall be consummated.

But we should be more especially attached to holy Church, because it is in her bosom alone that we can find the altar and the tabernacle. The Holy Eucharist belongs to the Church, it is her property, her own possession, her richest treasure, nay, more, it is her heart ; she alone can offer to God a sacrifice worthy of His infinite Majesty, she alone immolates upon her altars a pure and stainless Victim, the Lamb without spot, whose blood taketh away the sins of the world ; she only can

feed her children with that bread which gives them life and assures them of immortality; she alone can inebriate her children with that rich wine which brings forth virgins. Nowhere else can these priceless gifts be found. Go to our separated brethren, enter their temples, there is nothing to touch your hearts, you will find no altars, no tabernacles, Jesus is no longer there, He dwells with His spouse; you will behold no crucifix, no sweet image of Mary, for the Mother has followed the Son, and abides with Him, and the consoling worship of Mary is like the most Holy Eucharist, the unalienable property of the Holy Catholic Church.

Let us then be full of devoted attachment, reverence, and submission to our holy mother the Church, let us rejoice to be counted amongst the number of her children, and let us make full proof of our gratitude by accepting all her decisions with humble docility, and submitting to her decrees with unquestioning obedience. And let us be devoted to her interests, as children to a loving mother, that we may ever regard her glory as our glory, her joys as our joys, and her sorrows as our sorrows also.

Can a child look unmoved upon his mother's joys or sorrows, without being guilty of the grossest ingratitude? And should we not feel the deepest indignation and contempt for that unworthy son, who could see his mother's tears of sorrow flow, without making a single effort to relieve them? And why then are we so indifferent, so insensible to the sorrows of the mother who has begotten us in Christ? Why do we feel no com-

passion for her sufferings, and shed no tears for her griefs? Why do we even despise and insult her? Or is ingratitude no longer a sin when it is displayed to our mother in spiritual things, to the Immaculate Spouse of Christ? Ah, it is too evident that Faith has lost its pristine vigour in our souls: it is too true that all the noble instincts which arise in her defence in the hearts of all true Christians, are well nigh extinct in ours, and that we are but the degenerate children of that race of saints and heroes who sacrificed their earthly possessions, and even their lives in defence of the cause of God, and of His holy Church.

And those Christians who look coldly upon the trials under which the Church is even now oppressed, those who permit themselves to sit in judgment upon her actions, those who even join with her enemies in condemning her, how can they dare to boast of their attachment to their holy mother, how can they call themselves her faithful servants?

Let us not condemn their conduct as they justly deserve, but let us pity those who can contemplate without feelings of the deepest reverence and affection, the noble form of our Holy Father, Pius IX., who rules the world in meekness, and shines with the double glory of his supreme authority and dignity, and that noble seal of suffering which he has borne so patiently and so long. Ah, his virtues will be more correctly estimated in time to come, and posterity will do justice to his saintly and noble qualities. But what needs it? When God has already pronounced judgment in his cause, and conferred upon him a visible sign of His

approbation in that crown of thorns which He bears upon his noble brow, by giving him to drink deeply of that bitter cup of suffering which his adorable Master drained before him : the Master whose representative and vicar he is upon earth ?

And let us, who can at least appreciate in some degree the inestimable benefits which holy Church bestows upon us, surround the throne of the successor of St. Peter with our deepest veneration, sympathy and love ; let his interests be dearer to us than our own, let us sorrow in his sorrow, joy in his joy. We have no power to uphold his rights so boldly infringed, or to defend his authority so contemptuously despised by his rightful subjects : but at least we have hearts to love him, and we may plead his cause before God with the all-powerful voice of prayer. Let us then raise our hearts and voices to God in unceasing, fervent prayer, let us implore our Blessed Lord to shorten the days of trial to His Church, and to stretch forth His Hand continually in benediction upon the head of His chosen servant, who daily blesses the great Christian family of the Church, in His most holy name.

Let us sigh and weep for the miseries which have befallen the Church, but let us also revive our faith and courage, and remember, that although she may be afflicted, tried and persecuted, yet she can never perish. The promise of Jesus Christ Himself assures us of her immortal existence, the lessons of the past give us confidence in the future, and the enemies who now surround the Church with vain and impious threatenings, will all dis-

appear and leave no trace behind, as those have vanished who assaulted her in former ages. But as for her, leaning calmly and confidently upon the Almighty Arm of her heavenly Spouse, trusting implicitly to His unfailing promise, she will pass majestically on from age to age, bearing the Cross of Jesus, and treading in His steps along the Way of Sorrows. Her courage can never be cast down, her confidence shall never be shaken, for she knows that she is pursuing the straight path to heaven, that her trials and sorrows all work together for her good, because they effect her sanctification, and render her more pleasing in the eyes of her Saviour and Redeemer. She is not afraid of persecutions, for she knows that the throne of the first Roman Pontiff was a cross, that Peter, like his Master, ascended joyfully that altar of sacrifice, and that amidst the long line of his successors in the Apostolic Chair, there was not one who recoiled before the face of suffering, or hesitated when he was called to grasp the martyr's crown.

O Jesus, most sweet and loving God of the Holy Eucharist, Thou who art not only the worshipped Guest of Thy Church in the holy sacrament of Thy love, but art also its Spouse, its Soul, its Breath, and its Life; Thou who art its Treasure and its Love, watch over Thy Church, protect it, defend it from its enemies, support it in all the trials which Thou shalt see fit to send it, and grant that they may all tend to its sanctification and to the manifestation of Thy almighty power and love. And thou too, sweet Mary, Virgin immaculate, powerful and loving protectress of the

Church ! Thou who art her Queen, her support, her refuge in the day of battle, and in the hour of trial also, cast upon her a glance of love and mercy, behold and pity her tears, dry them in their very fountain : and protect more especially the sacred person of the universal father of the faithful, cover him with thy maternal protection, remember his love for thee, his zeal for thy glory : and remember also, that the voice of the Chief Pastor which now ascends to thee in supplication and tears, is the voice of him who so lately filled the Church with joy, by placing thy dearest and most glorious privilege and title in the number of the dogmas of the Church.

Speak one word in his favour, sweet Mary, intercede with Jesus in favour of His Church, and soon will peace be restored to her : our sorrow shall be turned into joy, and our hearts shall overflow with gratitude, and bless with redoubled joy and love, the mercy and compassion of the Mother of God, and the power and the love of her Divine Son. Amen.

HYMN FOR THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL, AND THE  
SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

Psalm ii.

Why roar the heathen hosts, so wild uprising?  
 Why do the realms imagine a vain thing?  
 Earth's monarchs rise, high chiefs the war devising  
 On God, and on His own anointed King.  
     "Break we all their bonds in twain,  
     Cast them from us, cord and chain."  
 He dwells in heaven who laughs them all to scorn,  
 The voice of mockery from the Lord is borne!

Then shall He speak to them in wrath and chiding,  
 In withering anger vex them and confound;  
 Yet is Mine oil upon My King abiding  
 On Zion, Mine own holy mountain crowned.  
     Hear the covenant and decree  
     God the Lord spake out to Me.  
 "Thou art My Son," He said, "even I to-day  
 Have Thee begotten, ask, and win Thy way:

Ask, and behold, the heathen are assigned Thee,  
 Into Thine hands I give all ends of earth,  
 To bruise with iron rod, to cast behind Thee  
 Dashed like a vessel on the potter's hearth.  
     Now then, O ye kings, be wise  
     Lords of earth, your heart chastise,  
 Serve God in fear, rejoice with trembling; own  
 And kiss with loyal love the anointed Son.



Kiss ye the Son ere yet His ire be glowing  
So might ye perish on your tardy way,  
Soon will He blaze, in wrath and zeal o'erflowing,  
Thrice blessed all who trust in Him that day.

J. K.

FINIS.



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